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George Gilder Shatters the Myth of the Glass Ceiling

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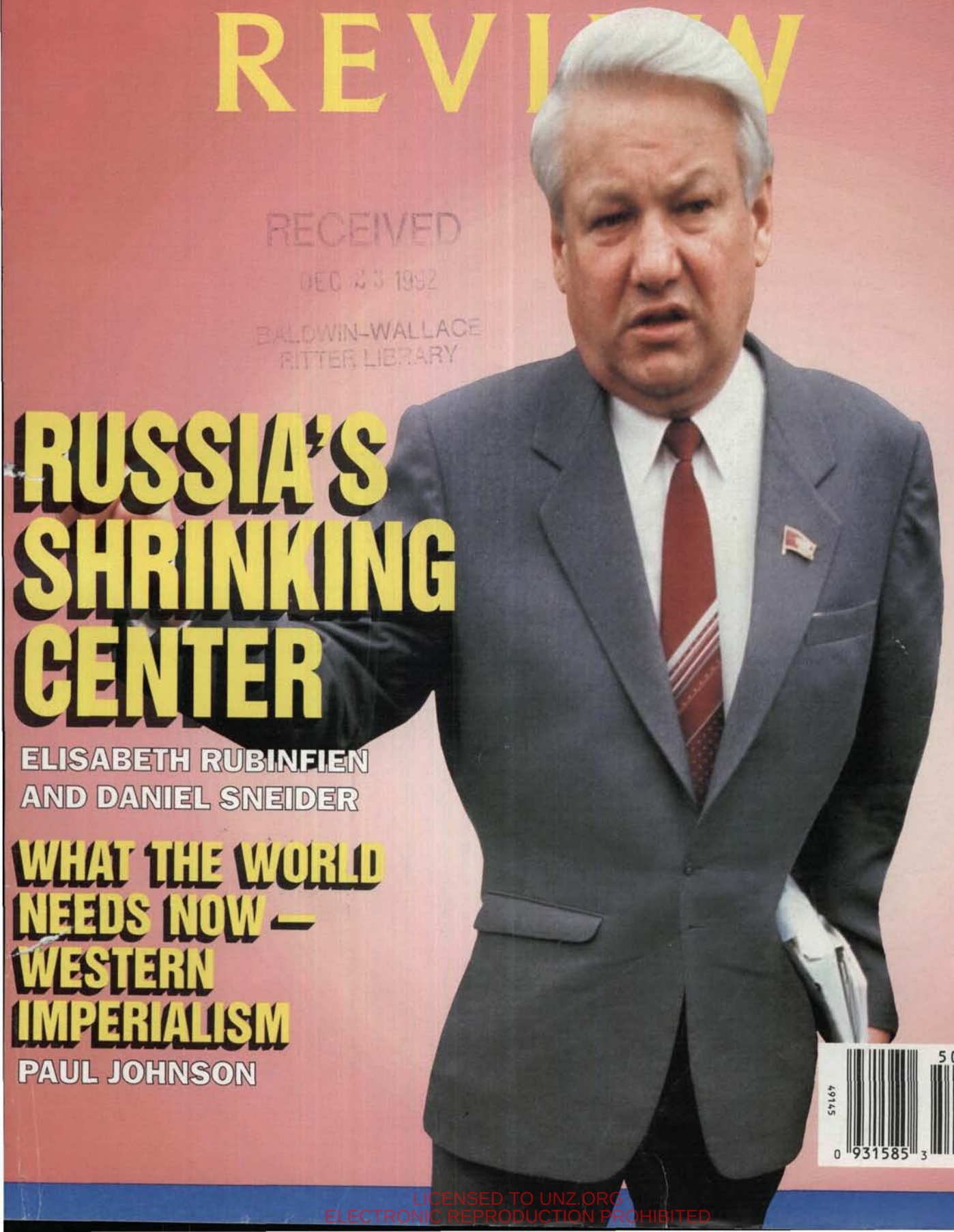

RUSSIA'S SHRINKING CENTER

ELISABETH RUBINFIEN AND DANIEL SNEIDER

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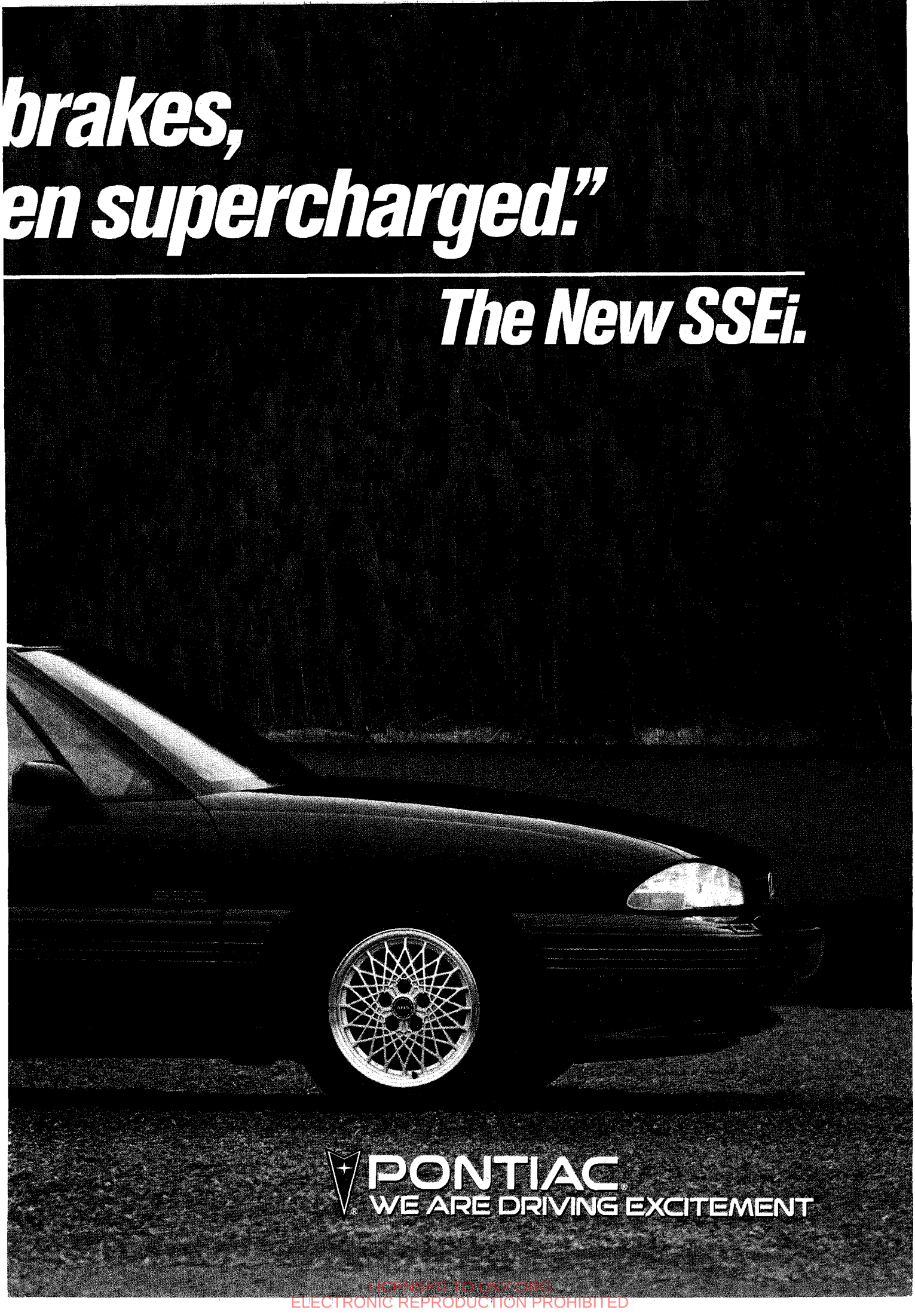

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NATIONAL REVIEW

DECEMBER 14, 1992 VOL. XLIV, NO. 24

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Cover photo by J. Dezort/Photo Press/SABA

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The Audit Bureau

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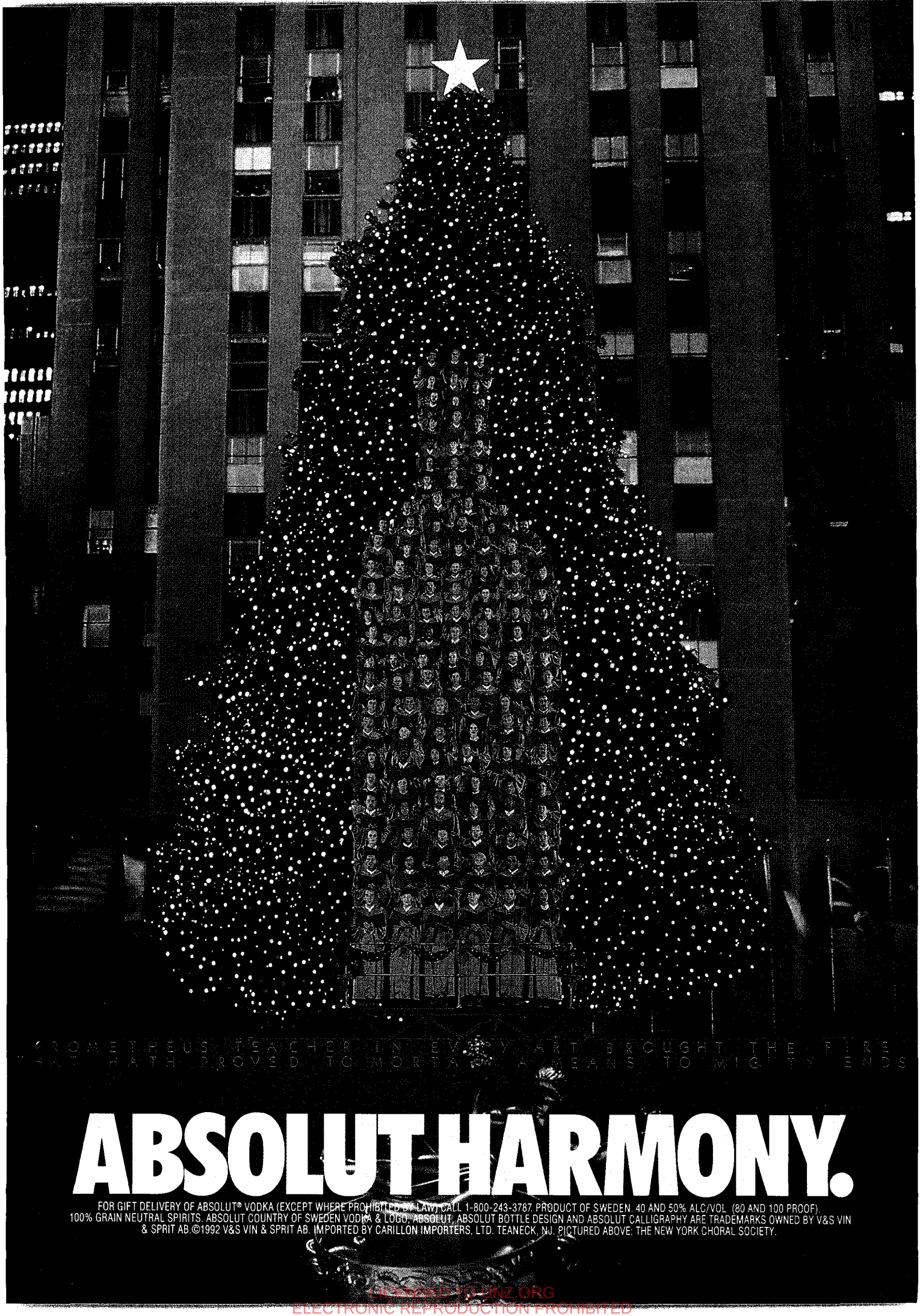

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John Hudick, Ford Quality Surveillance Inspector

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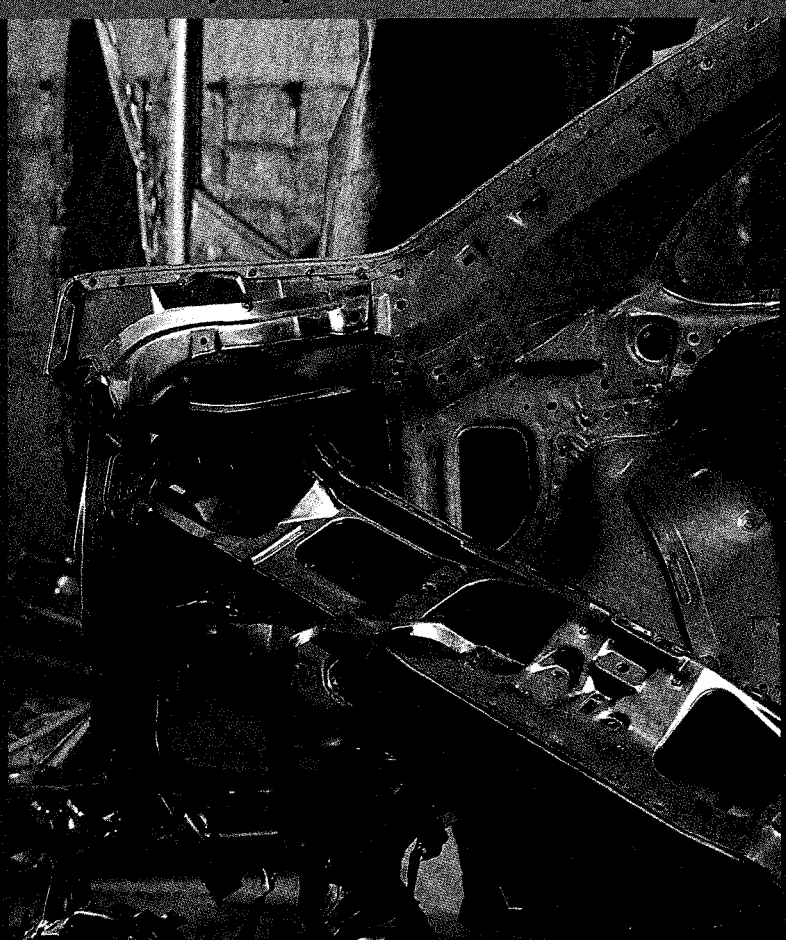

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LETTERS

Abortion Wars

Mark Cunningham's "The Abortion War" [Nov. 2] is a welcome and realistic evaluation of the pro-life political situation.

But while Mr. Cunningham is also correct that "the abortion war . . . cannot be won by simply asserting that abortion is immoral," I can't help but question the suggestion that the immediate alternative strategy should be to show where abortion laws have "gone wild."

Case in point: On November 3, Maryland voters decided on an abortion referendum dealing with parental consent. Advertisements featured women emphasizing their pro-choice position, but supporting parental consent. The proposition is that abortion is okay if the child's maternal grandparents say so. Yes, statistics indicate that parental-consent laws do reduce the number of abortions, but given the continuing slide into moral relativism, how long will this last?

Mr. Cunningham probably comes closer with the argument that "a moral life is a happy life," if among the definitions of *happy* we include the concept of personal safety. In a secular, post-Christian society, it may be more effective to suggest a connection between the willful killing of children in the womb and the sort of social pathology that has turned the streets of many large cities into murderous jungles (with apologies to the denizens of real jungles). The late Leopold Tyrmand discussed this phenomenon in the pages of NATIONAL REVIEW as early as 1980, but my experience is that for some reason pro-lifers seem to overlook this argument.

John Finerty
Alexandria, Va.

Unmanning the Schools

Regna Lee Wood has a valid and timely argument against the "look-say" method of teaching reading ["That's Right—They're Wrong," Sept. 14]. Yet I believe the horrendous pedagogical techniques described in her article are but one symptom of an epistemological problem with roots deeper than even she imagines. The real problem lies in an unchecked educational utopianism that first prospered under the ostensibly benevolent guidance of Horace Mann, and has been watered and manured faithfully by five or six generations of progressive educators.

As Mrs. Wood suggests, the Pandora's box of educational maladies we now see around us is chained open by a profound ignorance on the part of those who control our schools. It is time for a new look at some old ideas. Significant victories will not be won in American education without profound re-evaluation of the ideologies that shaped it in the first place.

Kenneth L. Smith
Wyoming, Mich.

Full Election Press

In post-mortem response to Lorrin Anderson's question, "What happens when the umpire picks up bat and glove?" you get a new, media-preferred President ["Here Now the News," Nov. 16]. Who can any longer deny that the fourth estate is the most influential and hence powerful force in our country?

Like Mr. Anderson, I have made the odyssey from McGovern to Reagan even as I remain a registered Democrat. It was with a "shred of fair-mindedness" that I was initially repelled by a prejudicial media that was telling me everything that I wanted to hear except the truth, and took my first faltering steps toward conservatism. As a young liberal, I thought I was for the underdog. I was wrong. Whoever the liberal press is for, it is, by the nature of their support, not the underdog. In an age where "stupidity has begun to think" and doublespeak comes from the Left rather than as predicted from the Right, I have never felt so vulnerable, so much the underdog, so conservative.

Jan Boggs
Meridian, Miss.

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"Buying everyone a round of drinks might help get the economy moving again."

PC Sheriff

In his fine-tooth search for PC in *Unforgiven* [Sept. 14], John Simon skirts an important point. Little Bill Daggett may be intended to personify the conservative police state, but he is imbued with all the worst traits of liberals. Consider: 1) He is always talking, loves to dwell on technicalities, and relishes a captive (literally) audience; 2) he cannot resist gratuitously rewriting history, in the guise of revealing the "truth" behind English Bob's memoirs; 3) he takes if-looks-could-kill offense at even jocular criticism of his handiwork (a leaky roof); and 4) most significantly for a lawman, he fails to judge people by their actions. He takes a classic neo-liberal "good people may do bad things" approach to the movie's central crime, yet he engages in the worst tokenism regarding firearms—folks who carry guns are automatically "people of low character." What more do you need? This guy is Bob Beckel with a gun. Little Bill is proof of Joseph Sobran's observation that people are quickest to accuse others of the very traits they dread finding in themselves.

Joe Skilton
Portland, Ore.

Corrigenda

My piece "The Poetry of Brand Names" ["The Gimlet Eye," Nov. 16] contains two typographical errors. In Baudelaire's "*Sed Non Satiata*" the word "*constance*" unaccountably underwent a sex-change operation when it was fit to print: "*au constance*" became "*à la constance*." *Le constance* is a South African wine, which enjoyed a certain vogue in France in the nineteenth century (Baudelaire might have first tasted it when he stopped at the Cape on his way back from the island of Mauritius); it balances the better-known French wine ("*nuits*") at the end of that Baudelairean line. Both meaning and meter demand the masculine.

Second, the Russian for typewriter is not "*pishushchaya mashina*" but "*pishushchaya mashinka*"; a diminutive "*k*" (but not hypocoristically so) should be slipped epenthetically into the penultimate place. *Vive le pédant!*

Peter Lubin
Cambridge, Mass.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Shadows Before Them

■ There can be few more agreeable positions in life than that of President-elect. The sitting President is still responsible for what happens, particularly if it is unpleasant, but any really important decisions have to be cleared with the incoming Chief Executive.

The results are foreordained. If a policy looks likely to incur unpopularity, Mr. Clinton will assume an expression of great seriousness and point out that he cannot intrude on Mr. Bush's prerogatives. If there are goodies to be doled out, however, he will associate himself with the decision. And if, like GATT, it contains both kicks and kindnesses, then it will be entirely suited to Mr. Clinton's practiced equivocation.

Otherwise, he can go to lunches, dinners, and parties at Pamela Harriman's, with occasional excursions to the ghetto to show that his heart is in the right place. And since he has done nothing and so offended no one, he gets a warm reception.

Meanwhile, however, in Wodehouse's immortal phrase: Fate, in the background, is quietly slipping lead into the boxing glove. He has to become President eventually. And the fun comes to an end.

■ One of the advantages of a change of government—admittedly, I'm whistling to keep my spirits up—is that it enables a reconsideration of policies. Even as Mr. Clinton has been eating and drinking to the applause of Georgetown, the longstanding policy of encouraging exchange-rate "stability" has been looking shaky.

The European system of fixed exchange rates has been in more or less permanent crisis since "Black Wednesday," when the British pound left the system. A few days before we went to press, the Spanish peseta and the Portuguese escudo were devalued by 6 per cent. The Danish krone and the Irish punt are now judged vulnerable. And even the French franc is beginning to look iffy—only a few days after the *Financial Times* ran an admiring article on how the French monetary authorities had finally tamed the speculators. Heigh ho.

Milton Friedman predicted just such turbulence (*NR*, June 11, 1990) when he pointed out that a system of fixed exchange rates offers neither the flexibility of floating rates nor the unalterable certainty of a single currency. It therefore invites speculators to make easy money by placing a one-way bet against weak currencies. In this case, they have made (and the central bankers have lost) billions by betting against a number of weak currencies in quick succession.

Another far-sighted prophet on this one is Professor Alan Walters, who, as Mrs. Thatcher's economic advisor, firmly opposed British participation in the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. But he at least seems to have achieved due recognition. When he boarded the Concorde the other day, he got a round of applause from the assorted millionaires.

It would be nice to think that this lesson had also registered with Mr. Clinton and, perhaps more important, with his economic advisors such as Robert Reich. But since a policy of floating rates doesn't need the constant supervision of politicians and government advisors, that is probably a forlorn hope.

■ It has been brought to my attention (i.e., I've had a number of irritable telephone calls) that the cartoon caption on our last cover was obscured in some cases by the address sticker.

The words were those of the original Peter Arno cartoon, which has the defeated boxer saying plaintively to his hard-faced manager: "All of a sudden you stop saying 'we.'" In Nick Garland's pastiche, of course, this was George Bush addressing James Baker.

It was a very good joke, and I apologize to those subscribers who were deprived of it. —JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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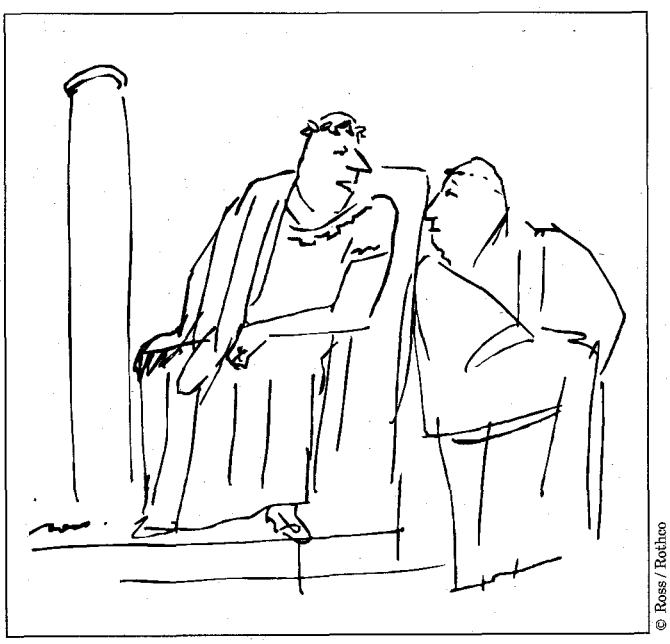
FOR THE RECORD

■ Who's up, who's down in **Clinton** transition? Up: **George Stephanopoulos**, very liberal director of communications in the campaign. He is already established as chief spokesman; is expected to advise on policy and legislative strategy as well. . . . Down: VP-elect **Al Gore**. Spectacle of Gore standing behind Clinton at his first press conference, rigid and silent, bodes an end to campaign talk of "partnership." . . . Inauguration, says Inauguration Committee aide **Richard Mintz**, will be both folksy and dignified. He sees it as "a cross between a state dinner at the White House and a Crittenden County 'coon supper.'" . . . Meanwhile, battle has begun for control of Republican National Committee. **Dan Quayle** has strongly endorsed his former deputy chief of staff and current co-chairman of National Republican Congressional Committee, **Spencer Abraham**, for RNC chairman. . . . Others would prefer to leave Abraham, known as nuts-and-bolts man, at NRCC and give RNC post to more issues-oriented conservative; **Pete du Pont**, briefly favored, has withdrawn. . . . **Rich Bond**, current chairman, did not endear himself with biting attack on du Pont—"disloyal, unseemly, and cowardly"—for entering his name into RNC race before **George Bush** was actually defeated. Bond's own candidate: Labor Secretary **Lynn Martin**. That spells the end for her, said one Republican insider: "Whoever Rich Bond supports will not get the job." . . . Another victim of Bond potshots, **Pat Buchanan**, landed on his feet. Buchanan has great mailing list, amassed during primary campaign; is said to be starting a think-tank.

■ Over on Capitol Hill, Senate Democratic leadership unchanged, with **George Mitchell** (Me.) returned as Majority Leader and **Wendell Ford** (Ky.) as Majority Whip. **Charles Robb** (Va.) will step down as chairman of Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee; touted as candidates for post, two Far Left–liberals, **Christopher Dodd** (Conn.) and **Barbara Mikulski** (Md.). . . . Republican leadership also unchanged, with **Bob Dole** (Kan.) returning as Minority Leader, **Alan Simpson** (Wyo.) as Minority Whip, and **Phil Gramm** (Tex.) as chairman of National Republican Senatorial Committee. . . . Gramm—a conservative hero because of Gramm–**Rudman**, until he spoiled it with role in **Richard Darman**'s 1990 budget summit—beat out conservative challenger **Mitch McConnell** by just one vote. Making the difference for Gramm: votes of **Al D'Amato** (N.Y.), **Bob Packwood** (Ore.), and **Arlen Specter** (Pa.), all of whom had close calls in general election. . . . House conservatives optimistic about chances of **Dick Armey** (Tex.; ACU: 96) becoming Republican Conference Chairman. Armey faces December 7 election against current chairman, **Jerry Lewis**. It is the members of new Congress who choose, and Armey looks to get votes of 28 to 30 of the 47 new Republican members. . . . **George Will** reports that 148 representatives and 30 senators in 103rd Congress will be subject to term limits—including House Speaker **Tom Foley** (Wash.), 6 years; Majority Leader **Dick Gephardt** (Mo.), 8 years; and Majority Whip **David Bonior** (Mich.), 6 years—thanks to ballot initiatives in their states. . . . Common Cause found that of the 349 incumbents who were on the ballot on election day (the other 86 had resigned, retired, lost in primary, or been redistricted out), 325 (or 93 per cent) were re-elected. . . . Departing members have consolation prize: enormous pensions. **Les AuCoin** (D., Ore.), who gave up House seat for unsuccessful challenge to Sen. Bob Packwood, will receive lifetime pension amounting, according to National Taxpayers Union, to over $2.8 million. At least 14 more departing congressmen would collect $2 million each, and 70, over $1 million. Since pensions are based on three highest salary years, recent self-awarded 40 per cent pay raise means a 30 per cent pension increase.



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"By the way, just what are *the Ides of March?"*

■ Ominous moderation: **Nelson Mandela** keeping quiet about charges of corruption in **F. W. de Klerk**'s National Party government, and promising whites a measure of protection in a future South Africa—which means he is increasingly hopeful about its being an ANC-ruled South Africa. . . . **John Major** had another close call over Maastricht, winning approval to proceed with consideration of treaty by only 3 votes, with 18 Tory MPs bolting party rarnks. . . . In Pakistan, fiery former premier, current opposition leader **Benazir Bhutto**, caused a riot when she was barred from entering capital city, Islamabad. She was hit by police nightsticks, but was saved from injury by bulletproof vest.

■ Among the firsts in 1992 election: **Althea Garrison**, first known cross-gender representative. Miss Garrison (R.), who won a seat in Massachusetts legislature, assumed female identity 16 years ago.

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THE WEEK

■ Hillary Clinton has indicated that she would like to be called "Presidential Partner" rather than "First Lady"—perhaps to avoid the stigma of being known as *prima donna inter pares*.

■ The election brought us a landslide, all right: term-limits proposals won in all 14 states where they were on the ballot. In 13 of those states—including California, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and Florida—they took from 55 to 77 per cent of the vote, with the overall average a decisive 66 per cent. Term limits collected an aggregate of nearly 21 million votes, dwarfing Bill Clinton's 14 million in those same states, and more than Ross Perot won nationwide. Here was the electorate speaking in a roar —yet the major news media, while hyping Mr. Clinton's "mandate for change," have said next to nothing about it. (They're trying not to tell us something.) The only close vote was in Washington state, where Tom Foley campaigned hard to discourage the proposal, and it still won with 52 per cent. This was a tremendous victory. But we've been served notice that the Democrats and their media friends will do all they can to keep it from going further.

■ Washington Theater presents: *Line-Item: A Tragicomedy in Three Acts*. Act I: Little Rock. Democratic congressional leaders, who opposed giving Republican Presidents a line-item veto, meet with President-elect Clinton and discuss giving him modified veto. Speaker Foley, wearing Greek mask, proclaims his approval of line-item veto, provided it can be overridden by simple majority vote. Mr. Clinton (crossing left to right and back) calls plan "intriguing." Act II: Inside the Beltway. Washington powers, reading entrails, divine that reform is looming. Clouds descend, depositing Senator Robert Byrd, other lawmakers, snorting opposition. Chorus of Clinton aides assure lobbyists (behind arras) that line-item veto is not a priority. Rejoicing lobbyists return, via trapdoor, to Hades. Act III: Capitol Hill. Mr. Clinton enters as spotlight on line-item veto fades. Crossing to center, he is assailed by chorus of reporters demanding that Delphic Oracle speak. Mr. Clinton, in a dramatic move, loses his voice. Fog rolls in. Sound of a distant shipwreck. Curtain falls. Audience demands money back.

■ Republican pollsters Neil Newhouse and Bill McInturff warned at the recent GOP Governors' Conference that, in the words of the *Washington Post*, "The party's conservative image is turning off many voters." Of course, the negatives that independent and Democratic voters associate with conservatives—"narrow-minded . . . more or less well-off financially, and don't give a hoot about anyone . . . restrictive . . . rigid, not flexible"—are standard criticisms, balanced by the equally standard positive associations with conservatism. Polls also show Americans identifying themselves in nearly equal proportions as Republicans and as Democrats, and nearly twice as many calling themselves conservative as liberal. Reducing taxes and government spending is still by far the most frequently identifed conservative goal. We note that Mr. McInturff has a long record of unconservatism—further reason for taking his analysis with a grain of salt.

■ The GOP Conference was enlivened at its last session when Governor Kirk Fordice of Mississippi, in response to a question, said that the United States is a "Christian nation. . . . It's just a simple fact of life." Governor Carroll Campbell of South Carolina, feeling a need for damage control, draped his arm around Mr. Fordice's shoulders and said that his fellow governor had forgotten to add "the Judaeo part."

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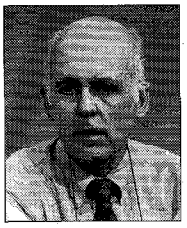

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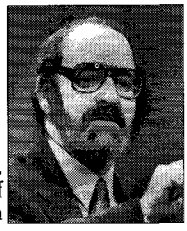

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Doubtless provoked by Mr. Campbell's blow-dried unction, Mr. Fordice replied: "If I wanted to do that I would have done it." Governor Fordice was less than tactful. His original observation is accurate sociologically and historically; inaccurate constitutionally and, for most Christians, theologically (nations simply do not belong to an order of things that can be said to follow Christ, or partake of His nature). But Governor Campbell's response and the flap that ensued have less to do with any of this than with the fact that "Christian" and "fundamentalist" have become devil-adjectives in mainstream political discourse, signaling the presence of extremists and knotheads. If *that* is what Governor Fordice was objecting to, we have some sympathy for him.

■ The reason for George Bush's election loss, according to a Haitian Catholic priest, is that Mr. Bush has been under a voodoo curse ever since he refused to reinstall former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. We suspect there really *was* a curse—but it kicked in when the President abandoned voodoo economics.

■ A panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington has handed former President Nixon a legal victory, much to the annoyance of his enemies. From 1789 to 1974, Presidents treated their papers as their own property—carting them off, donating them to libraries, shredding the bad stuff, whatever. Then Watergate precipitated a revolution, and Congress passed legislation confiscating Mr. Nixon's papers (ostensibly for purposes of the judicial inquiry) and decreeing that henceforth official presidential papers would be the property of the U.S. Government. The Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality, and Mr. Nixon lost that battle. But he then argued that even if the taking was legal, it was nonetheless a taking of what precedent had treated as personal property, and that he was therefore entitled to fair compensation. His able lawyers documented the practices of all Chief Executives from Washington to Johnson, and the appellate court agreed. This is a tribute to three honorable judges—two of whom were Carter appointees—who unanimously read the law as it was, instead of following the mob.

The Hillary Watch

She isn't like Jackie or Mamie or Grace
(I'm talking Grace Coolidge); but Rosalynn's pace
And Nancy's persona are starting to show,
While something suggestive in Hillary's "No!"
Reminds me, God help us, of Eleanor, who,
For cranky old pots, is the give-away clue.

W. H. VON DREELE

ANNOUNCING: A CONSERVATIVE JAMBOREE

On January 20, 1993, Bill Clinton will be inaugurated 42nd President of the United States. The following weekend, the National Review Institute will convene a Conservative Summit at the Mayflower Hotel, deep inside the Beltway. There will be post-mortems and prognostications, talk of Mr. Clinton's possible successors and seminars on What to Do till the Doctor Arrives. For more information, see the ad on page 33 of this issue.

■ Angola, one of the seeming successes of the Bush Administration's foreign policy, is going sour. The elections at the end of September produced a disputed result, and the 17-year conflict between the Marxist MPLA regime and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels has erupted again into violence. With the departure of Cuban troops under the 1988 accords, the U.S. seemed to lose interest. The UN observers who were to monitor the election numbered only 400, in a vast country of 5 million voters. (In neighboring Namibia in 1989, by contrast, the UN provided 4,200 peacekeeping troops and 1,700 observers, for a voting population of just half a million.) Among the results: severe under-registration of the rural electorate that constitutes UNITA's base; widespread reports of bribery, stolen ballot boxes, and police intimidation; mysterious power blackouts in key provinces as votes were being counted. In the renewed violence, regime forces launched a full-scale military assault on UNITA's headquarters in Luanda; over one thousand people were killed, including UNITA's vice president, members of Savimbi's family, and two UN peacekeepers. We should have no illusions about Savimbi and his fellow UNITA leaders—as Radek Sikorski pointed out in these pages three years ago, though not Marxists, they are hardly Jeffersonian democrats either. But the U.S. has an obligation to finish what it started—to ensure a fair political outcome that includes UNITA.

■ On October 13, a special commando team of German police seized 4.8 pounds of enriched uranium from a car in a Munich parking lot. The same day, police in Munich, Frankfurt, and Bochum arrested seven men alleged to be part of a "nuclear mafia" smuggling nuclear material out of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for sale to the international black market. Federal German authorities say they have investigated over 100 cases of such deadly and illicit trade in 1992, up from 29 in 1991. The danger grows. The episode dramatizes not only the need for vigilant law enforcement but also the reasons why the West has a large stake in the restoration of social order and legitimate authority in the former Communist East.

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■ SPORICIDIN UPDATE: The FDA, which last year banned the Sporicidin cold sterilizing solution (see "Who Will Regulate the Regulators?" *NR*, Nov. 2) and then discovered that the only flaw was in the government labs' tests, is still attacking its victim. In order to get Sporicidin back on the market, the company must perform three series of tests to prove the worth of products that had been repeatedly approved by government agencies and used by hospitals without complaint for 14 years. One set is to prove the solution is compatible with materials in hospital equipment (perhaps the hospitals failed to notice it dissolving their glassware and instruments?); a second, to show "product stability" (though there are no government protocols on how to demonstrate this); a third, a repetition—"within thirty days"—of the sporicidal efficacy tests which the FDA itself took six months to bungle last year and which independent laboratories have told the FDA would require ninety days. In addition, "Sporicidin must cease making any statements representing that there has been no change in the formulation of its disinfectant products." That is, Sporicidin must cease telling the plain truth because the plain truth makes the FDA look like a bunch of fools. After six telephone calls and two faxes asking 1) what change the FDA believed had been made in the product, 2) if the FDA acknowledges that there has been no change, why it is demanding that the company keep silent, and 3) whether an outside observer could not reasonably conclude that the agency is doing its best to cover up its blunders, FDA spokesman Sharon Snider talked with our man Peter Samuel. She informed him she could not get answers to his questions though she understood such answers did exist.

■ Eight social workers have been killed and hundreds stabbed, beaten, or threatened by their clients over the past five years, according to the *New York Times*. Child-support enforcement, the "mainstreaming" of mental patients, and the federal law requiring caseworkers to confront parents about reported child abuse undoubtedly explains much of the violent upsurge. But the underlying theme, ignored in the *Times* report, is clear: the people taking violent action are overwhelmingly from poor and broken homes where the freedom to live without politicians, bureaucrats, and social workers can only be dreamed about. Conservatives have always maintained that government social programs harm the alleged beneficiaries. In their rudimentary way, the beneficiaries are agreeing.

■ The Church of England has voted to ordain women, a move that seems equally remote from the spirit of early Christianity and of Henry VIII. *Time*, ever nudging us toward the progressive heights, pronounces feminism in the churches "the second Reformation," never mind that most of Christendom still rejects the *first* Reformation. And the feminists haven't convincingly explained why the Twelve Apostles were what they would call an "all-male club." After all, it's pretty clear Who bears responsibility for *that* selection process. The usual explanation—that Jesus was constrained by the customs of the time—seems pretty feeble, considering that His "hard sayings" drove off potential followers and brought down the wrath of the authorities. As Chesterton pointed out, a man who adapts smoothly to his environment doesn't end up on a cross. The suspicion lingers that it's the C. of E., not Jesus Christ, that displays subservience to contemporary pressures.

■ The American Catholic bishops . . . We're not even going to finish this item because we know nobody will read past the first four words.

■ Oh heck. The American Catholic bishops have shelved their long-awaited pastoral letter on women, which, after nine years of debate and revision, wound up in favor of equality but not ordination, which Milwaukee's Archbishop Rembert Weakland said would drive a generation of women away from the Church, and they finally said the hell with it. Catcalls should be addressed to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C.

■ They don't give National Book Awards for nothing. The award used to recognize excellence in writing; for the past decade or so, it has recognized contributions to, and beneficiaries of, liberal ideology. As a prerequisite, currently, an author either must belong to a minority (gay, black, Asian, or a combination) or must expose some repugnant feature of American history or politics (Vietnam, the nuclear arsenal, the treatment of blacks). So this year's winner in the nonfiction category seemed appropriate enough: Paul Monnette for *Becoming a Man*, about coming out as a homosexual. But how to explain the winner for fiction, Cormac McCarthy? Mr. McCarthy is a white male heterosexual in good standing. His novel, *All the Pretty Horses*, celebrates the American Southwest. He's also a terrific writer. Heads will roll.

■ Don't forget your sweater, but bring a bathing suit too! You still hear about the greenhouse effect from time to time, but with the cold snap this summer and fall, that talk has mostly died down. Lately the media have taken to warning of an upcoming ice age—to be brought on, *Newsweek* carefully adds, by the greenhouse effect.

■ About which somebody should inform the young

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man at UC Berkeley, called "the Naked Guy" by his fellow students, who has been protesting sexual repression by parading around campus in his birthday suit. The university asked a committee to study the matter and propose a response before the ice age sets in.

A Social Disease?

IT HAS QUICKLY become a media "fact" that the Bush campaign's focus on a divisive social conservatism, particularly during the Houston Convention, is what lost the election. This is echoed by those few Republicans who have always opposed social conservatism.

Very interesting. But we seem to remember a sign at Clinton headquarters that read, "The economy, stupid." As consultants Tony Fabrizio and John McLaughlin point out, "Every post-election survey has shown that this election was fought on the economy, and it was President Bush's weakness on economic growth, jobs, taxes, and government spending that allowed both Ross Perot and Bill Clinton to take votes from him."

Some members of the Reagan majority are admittedly uncomfortable with social conservatism —but every member of a coalition is dissatisfied with some part of its program. Republicans do not have the option instead of outbidding the Democrats for their core constituencies. Gay-rightists and militant feminists, for example, have no reason to leave the Democratic Party, which has pledged to impose their agendas on the Supreme Court and the armed forces.

But what of women in general—the famous gender gap. Since the gender gap was first noticed, in 1980, moderate Republicans have blamed it on the social issues, especially abortion. But in 1980, 1984, and 1988 the gap overwhelmingly *helped* Reagan and Bush, who had massive majorities among men and slight leads among women. This year, when the Republicans lost, the gap actually *shrank*, as men moved in large numbers from Mr. Bush to Ross Perot. Mr. Bush's support among men and women differed by less than 1 per cent, while Mr. Perot—who was ardently pro-choice—drew 21 per cent of men and only 17 per cent of women. Moreover, Mr. Bush suffered no gap at all among white women, and unmarried women supported him more than did unmarried men (34 versus 32 per cent).

Diluting the social issues, indeed, might drive away important parts of the coalition. White born-again Christians were 17 per cent of the electorate and went 61 per cent for Mr. Bush (down 20 points in four years—economics counts for something with them too). Southern whites, 24 per cent of all voters, gave him 48 per cent of their votes—and most defectors went to Mr. Perot, not to Mr. Clinton. Single-issue pro-life voters account for between 8 and 13 per cent of the electorate; how do the GOP moderates propose to hold on to them? We should also remember that the Republican Convention produced not a dip in the polls, but an initial bounce of 9 to 15 points. Indeed, Republican tracking polls found that the Convention's first night, when Reagan and Buchanan spoke, produced the single most positive response among voters. Half of all voters surveyed around the same time thought family values should be a campaign issue. But the Bush campaign, simultaneously cynical and timorous, offered no defense when the media attacked the theme as "divisive" and "exclusionary," and dropped it one week later. As a result, only 15 per cent of voters thought it important by election day—but 65 per cent of them went for Mr. Bush. And since his advisors found no theme to replace it, they never compensated for those voters who went AWOL.

A broad but tolerant social conservatism clearly commands majority support in America today. Nearly three-quarters of Americans describe themselves as "extremely," "very," or "somewhat" religious. Few Americans want to impose their moral and religious views on others. Still less, however, do most Americans want government to impose a radical moral and sexual agenda on them or their children via the public schools, or to subsidize and promote forms of expression that insult their most deeply held beliefs. We see no consistency in a philosophy of government that bans a crucifix on public property but finances a crucifix immersed in urine—unless it is a philosophy of covert hostility to religion and traditional morality.

Conservatives and the Republican Party need not retreat from social conservatism. But they must clarify how that conservatism fits into the overall Republican philosophy of limited government. The overwhelming majority of conservatives oppose government action against homosexuals; but we also oppose turning people who are united only by sexual practices into a "protected class" with civil privileges. Similarly, while pro-lifers would like to persuade their fellow citizens to protect the unborn, the real political agenda today must be to restrict the "right" to abortion on demand created in *Roe* v. *Wade*—of which most Americans also disapprove. And the best thing the government can do for most families, aside from avoiding the Hillaryesque temptation to usurp the role of parents, is to reduce the tax burden, which now falls most heavily on married couples with children.

Such policies, as well as being right, are also popular. *Vide* a feature no less pronounced than the gender gap: "the marriage gap," in which unmarried voters lean to the Democrats while marrieds favor

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the GOP. This gap was 7 points in Mr. Bush's favor. In short, social conservatism gives strength to the GOP coalition—as long as it is one part of that coalition, which is all social conservatives ask. Mr. Bush's defeat is directly traceable to his abandonment of other parts of the Reagan agenda; it is foolish to point the finger to the single element that he retained.

The (Long-Term) Economy, Stupid

THE ECONOMY suffers from two ailments. For twenty years productivity growth has slowed, mainly because government has been diverting ever larger chunks of national income from private investment to consumption and regulation. Apart from that, there are short-run problems stemming from the 1990 recession and the recession-like recovery of the past 18 months.

During the campaign Governor Clinton promised to make short-term economic stimulus his number-one priority. Now that he is elected, he can afford to be honest about the state of the economy: GDP, consumer spending, exports, and spending on durable equipment are all at record real highs, while employment, a notoriously lagging indicator, has started to rise. With consumer debt levels falling and banks starting to lend again, the economy inherited by Bill Clinton is far healthier than the economy he described in his campaign.

Short-term stimulus, therefore, makes no economic sense. It might, in the first place, take years for a "short-run" package of infrastructure and investment tax credits to materially stimulate the economy. And the mere announcement of such plans would immediately raise the specter of mega-deficits and Carter-style inflation. The resulting rise in interest rates would squelch the upward momentum already under way.

Mr. Clinton's efforts to temper expectations about an early economic package are encouraging. He is not without short-run options, however. Prudent appointments at Treasury (Paul Volcker?) and OMB (almost anyone except the incumbent) would instill a sense of confidence not seen since the early Reagan years. Consumers will spend, companies will invest, and entrepreneurs will start new ventures if they are sure that Mr. Clinton will put economic growth ahead of government growth.

A credible plan to cut the deficit in half by 1996 would be the best short-term medicine. This will require spending caps on Social Security and Medicare, something the Democrats have rejected in every deficit-reduction battle over the past ten years. If history is any guide, liberal Democrats will instead demand tax hikes on the wealthy, which ultimately will affect everyone in the upper half of the income spectrum, with every $1 raised supporting $1.59 worth of spending—and the renewed prospect of Darmageddon.

But who knows? With their own man in the White House and the deficit now theirs, the Democrats may finally accept the responsibility they have avoided for so long. If not, they will assuredly have to accept the blame.

Passport to Scandal

THE State Department office that expedited the response to a Freedom of Information Act inquiry about Bill Clinton's passport records is being treated in Washington as if it were the Gestapo reincarnate. The Department's Inspector General concluded on November 18, reasonably enough, that the search was improperly speeded up for political purposes. But this is surely one of the lesser scandals of our nation's history, and we suspect much of the hyperventilation in Washington has equal political motivation.

Clearly, there was much curiosity among Republicans—and probably other Americans—about Mr. Clinton's Iron Curtain travels and rumors that he had considered renouncing his citizenship out of anti-Vietnam passion. Elizabeth Tamposi, in charge of the Passport Office (and a political appointee), wisely refrained from a fishing expedition. Then bona-fide FOIA requests came in from news organizations. Instead of tossing them in the hopper (usually a six-month wait), officials accelerated the search and segregated the files (along with those of Ross Perot and of Mr. Clinton's mother). Nothing damaging was found (and in any case the Privacy Act, unless waived by the subjects of the inquiry, would have barred release of any of it).

Meanwhile, a far more insidious scandal was emerging in Washington and getting far less attention. The ongoing inquisition by Iran–Contra Independent Counsel Lawrence Walsh had become blatantly politicized. A revised indictment against Caspar Weinberger, which could have been presented either weeks earlier or weeks later, was filed the Friday before election day. It gives details, irrelevant to the trial process, of Mr. Bush's participation in a key Oval Office discussion of arms for Iran. This timely intervention was the handiwork of Mr. Walsh's new aide, James Brosnahan, a Democratic activist, self-promoter, Clinton contributor, and confirmed Republican-hater. There are also grounds for asking if the Clinton campaign had advance word of the new indictment, since their gleeful press release on it was dated the day before it was filed. (They

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claimed a typo, and the media, setting aside their Watergate paranoia on this one occasion, accepted the explanation without demur.)

The Washington double standard sees nothing amiss in the malodorous Brosnahan affair, and continues its witchhunt against political figures in the lame-duck Bush Administration. But what did you expect?

Green Jobbery

BRETT HULSEY, environmental-policy advisor to President-elect Clinton, told a recent conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists that "the electorate proved we don't have to choose between the environment and jobs." That reminds us of a new Australian prime minister who, on being told by an aide that one of his campaign brainstorms flew in the face of the law of supply and demand, declared: "Then we'll just have to repeal that law. We have a mandate to do it."

Clinton's green aide, a former Sierra Club representative, told the conference that his new boss has tougher anti-pollution standards "on the top of his agenda"—up there with infrastructure—and that his new approach to the environment will create a whole host of extra jobs.

Of course you can "create" tens of thousands of jobs with almost any government initiative if you are completely unconcerned about whether those jobs are productive jobs, about how they are financed, and about the consequences for the rest of the economy. The environment can provide the political justification for whole new armies of inspectors to supervise recycling, waste disposal, ozone depletion, global-warming gases, toxic materials, water pollution, and all the rest. If only the EPA had the manpower to prosecute the cases, it could incarcerate thousands of environmental "criminals." For instance, only a handful of scoundrels like John Pozsgai and Bill Ellen are currently serving time for the awful crime of dumping soil in their own swampland.

VP-elect Al Gore's contribution to this environmental-job-creation brainstorming has been to propose that new technology be vetted for its environmental impact. Given that hundreds of thousands of production engineers, designers, and managers—as well as all the independent inventors and tinkerers out there—are changing the design and manufacture of products every day, a system to vet "technological change" would exhaust even the most ambitious bureaucratic empire-builders. Such systems of regulation invariably err on the side of caution, weighing risks more heavily than benefits—as AIDS sufferers can attest from the FDA's reluctance to permit potential therapies to be used even by terminally ill patients.

Would the Environmental Impact Technology Review Board (EITRB) ever have allowed the introduction of the automobile, the airplane, or penicillin? We can imagine the powerful arguments that could have been made against allowing the use of electric power if America during Thomas Edison's time had been afflicted by an EITRB. But such a board would have created plentiful jobs for technology-judging attorneys.

The Joint Economic Committee of the Congress released on November 7 a devastating paper, "Derailing the Small Business Job Express," which examines regulation's job-destroying record over the past four years. It points out that tens of thousands of small firms—bakeries, gas stations, restaurants, auto-body shops, small print shops, dry cleaners, and the like—are being "strangled by green tape." Simply getting EPA permits to operate under new Clean Air Act rules has been estimated to cost $16,000 for typical firms. Gillespie's report adds: "Given the small size of these [business] operations, CAAA [clean air act amendment] related costs in the tens of thousands of dollars will be sufficient to sink many firms, and will have severe impacts on their ability to employ workers." The Clintonians threaten to "do more" for the environment than Mr. Bush. We fear they are sincere.

Goodbye to All That

Mr. Weinberger's due to be tried
For the notes he unwisely denied
  As a pardon recedes
  Like a snake through the weeds
And the President ebbs like the tide.

W. H. VON DREELE

Worse than a Crime

IN RENEWING his campaign pledge of "immediate repeal" of the ban on homosexuals in the armed forces, President-elect Clinton proved that he is not always the canny politician of reputation.

The President of the United States must be, above all, a plausible Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. This role lifts him above the normal and somewhat disreputable level of "politics" and makes him an almost monarchical figure of national unity. The legitimacy of the Federal Government depends heavily on the popular faith that this government,

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for all its defects, is in the final analysis our defender.

Accordingly, any President's popularity is closely tied to his ability to play the role of Commander-in-Chief with authority, which is why war heroes have so often won the office and Michael Dukakis didn't. Harry Truman badly damaged his Presidency by firing a great war hero in Korea; Jimmy Carter shrank to risible dimensions when he seemed incapable of responding adequately to enemies abroad.

Mr. Clinton has obvious problems with this role, never having done military service and having, in fact, taken extraordinary steps to avoid it. Now, in his first public gesture as future Commander-in-Chief, he has shown a gross insensitivity to the soldier's life he was spared. The ban on homosexuality in the military is an entirely rational attempt to keep the explosive element of sexual desire out of the cramped conditions of barracks life, just like having separate quarters for women. As one wag has put it, President-elect Clinton seems not to understand that soldiers don't like to take showers with the kind of men who like to take showers with soldiers.

In taking this position, Mr. Clinton has antagonized the very men, from Colin Powell to the humblest grunt, whose unquestioning loyalty he would otherwise have enjoyed as a matter of course; he has politicized institutions whose virtues require exemption from politics; he has insulted a moral and virile code in order to introduce his generation's New Morality where it is likely to disrupt workable arrangements; he has underscored various questions about his own character which a fawning press had tried to squelch.

A man with better credentials might have been able to effect this "reform," assuming that such a man wanted to attempt it. In Mr. Clinton, however, it can only seem the presumption of a man for whom politics is all, and tradition nothing. It's surely a new sort of Commander-in-Chief who declares cultural war on his own troops.

Notes from the Jungle

ASKED what he foresaw as the terminus of civilization's decadence, T. S. Eliot envisioned people shooting each other at random. In 1964 James Burnham observed in *Suicide of the West* that American cities were becoming "jungles," which liberalism was unable either to see or to deal with. His remark was widely cited—by liberals, of course—as "alarmist thinking." Against all the *bien-pensants* of his day, Burnham expected the situation to get worse.

The returns are now in. The alarmists have failed

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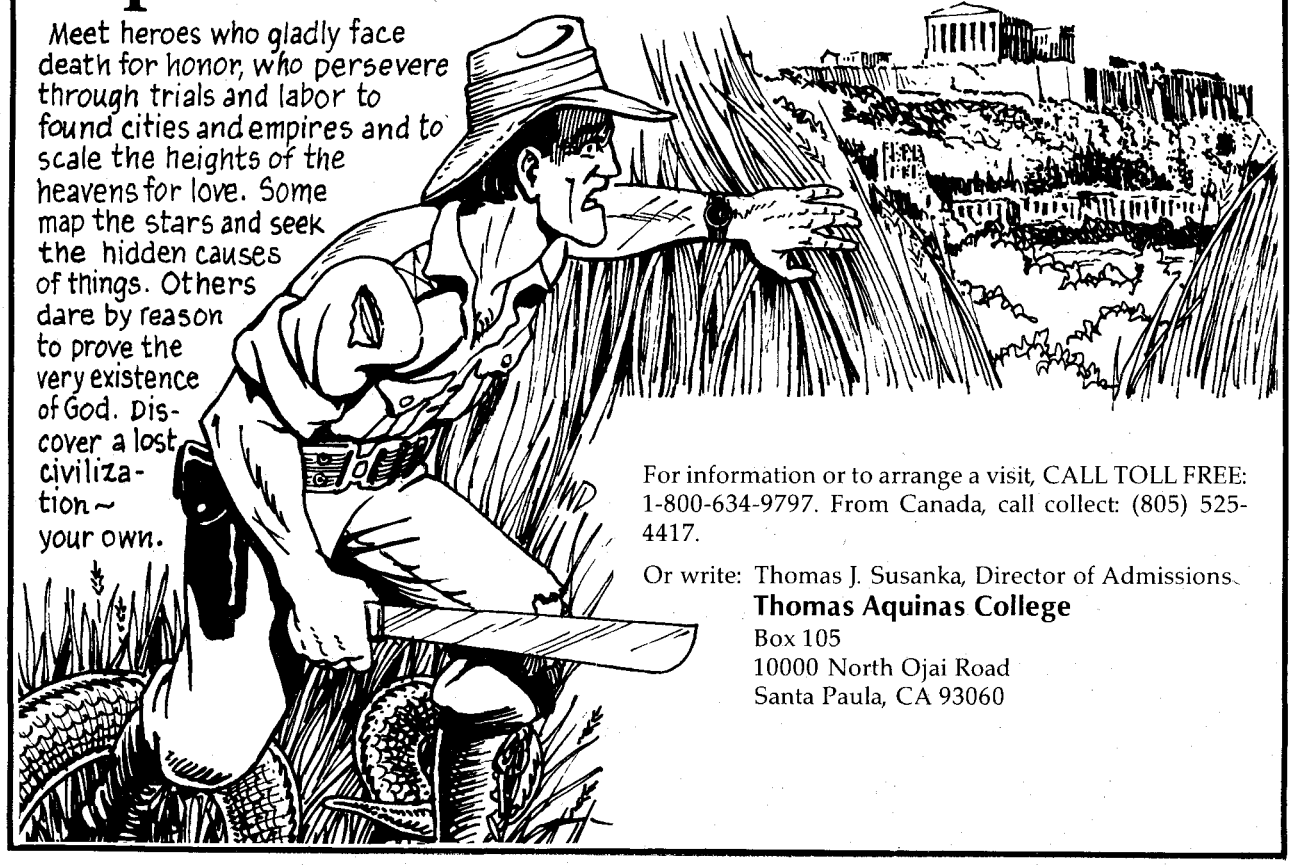
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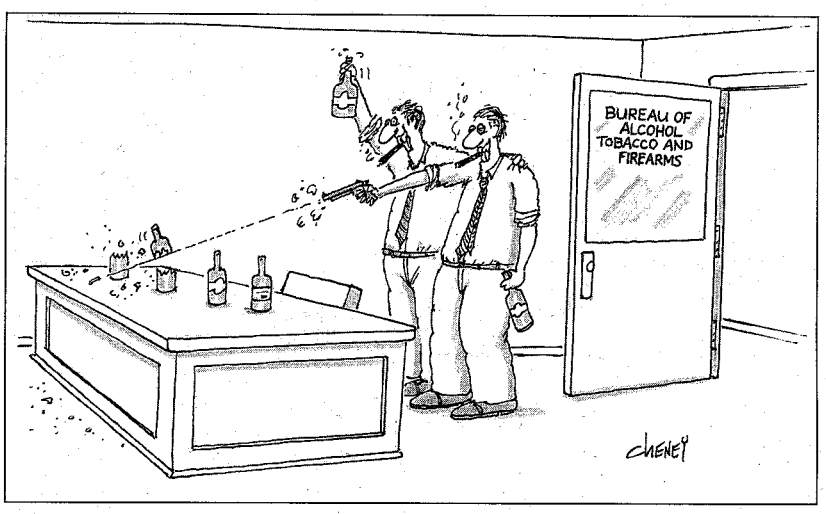
us. The Eliots and Burnhams were insufficiently hysterical, their voices too low, their predictions too modest. America's cities have become jungles in which the beasts are armed, and the random shootings claim even children.

At Jenner Elementary School in Chicago, three pupils have been shot to death this year. But why should we be shocked? "After all," writes George Will, "Chicago averages a shooting every 34 minutes and a murder every 8 hours, and the more than 13,000 shootings so far this year have killed 17 children under 14." One 9-year-old told him she tries to stay away from windows in her high-rise: "I be scared because my bed is by the window." Residents of New York, Washington, Detroit, Atlanta, and Los Angeles can supply their own competing horror stories.

"Alarmism" turns out to have been the optimist's name for prophecy. Our alarmists did their best, but their imaginations were limited; and anyway, few listened. Would Isaiah and Ezekiel have gotten any more attention?



NOTES & ASIDES

■ Memo to: Our Readers
From: WFB
Re: Thomas L. Rhodes

Effective December 1, it becomes official. Our long-standing friend and associate, Thomas L. (Dusty) Rhodes will have left the investment-banking firm of Goldman Sachs in order to join NATIONAL REVIEW. He will serve as the magazine's President, replacing WFB (who continues as President of NR Inc.). Dusty Rhodes has been a member of *NR*'s Board of Directors for four years, and of its Executive Committee for two years. The exact nature of his duties at *NR* will evolve. Meanwhile, he has undertaken to represent WFB as required.

TLR graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1963, and received his MBA from Wharton in 1965. He also serves on the Boards of Directors of the International Rescue Committee and the Manhattan Institute, and he is a founder of Change-NY.

He is on top of everything else a splendid fellow, which makes him fit well with his colleagues in our incomparable staff.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

Thought you might be interested in this classified ad from the frontiers of modern folk eugenics, San Francisco-style.

It was taped next to an ATM machine at Castro and Market. Even by her choice of location, the advertiser exhibits a rudimentary natural selection. I could go on with my exegesis, but that would spoil your fun.

Designer Genes Wanted

All of my gay male friends are HIV + and I'm a lesbian who wants to get pregnant. Want to help? Ever wanted to pass on your good traits but not the responsibility of being a parent? Let's talk if you are a HIV– gay man, healthy, substance/smoke-free, intelligent, attractive (hopefully with brown hair and green/hazel or blue eyes but negotiable), open-minded, honest, creative, politically left of center with a sense of humor and the curiosity necessary to answer this ad. Please enclose your phone number with your response so we may talk.

Any takers?

Raymond Spears
Santa Clara, Calif.

Dear Mr. Spears: We've passed the ad around the office, but we couldn't find any male with green/hazel eyes. Sorry. WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

We are looking for a few select clients for our services.

We work with companies that want to grow and prosper, no matter what the economic climate.

Consultec is a well-known and highly respected management resources group with an extremely effective process for optimizing client companies' potential.

I'll call you in a few days to explore the possibility of your being a candidate for our process.

Sincerely,
Anne McKenna
Marketing Representative
Consultec
New Rochelle, N.Y.

Dear Miss McKenna: Never mind us! Go see the Republican Party, Inc. Cordially, **WFB**

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ON THE SCENE

Yeltsin's Unfinished Revolution

ELISABETH RUBINFIEN AND DANIEL SNEIDER

Fred Carlson

Moscow

IN post-Soviet Russia, political crises are as frequent and as predictable as winter snow flurries. The next is scheduled to erupt on December 1, when the Congress of People's Deputies, the nation's highest legislature, convenes its winter session.

There, President Boris Yeltsin will confront yet another in a seemingly endless series of challenges to his rule. An array of enemies, from unrepentant Communists to nostalgic worshipers of the earlier incarnation of the Russian Empire, will rise to assail him. At stake are the future of the two shaky pillars of the Yeltsin government—the emerging market economy and the half-formed democracy.

So far Boris Yeltsin has emerged triumphant from each such engagement. He has relied on two political talents that eluded his now-carping predecessor—the abilities to speak to the common man and to forge viable compromises. And so far, he has avoided Mikhail Gorbachev's suicidal tendency to surround himself with enemies.

Miss Rubinfien is a Moscow correspondent for the Wall Street Journal. *Mr. Sneider is the Moscow bureau chief of the* Christian Science Monitor.

All of these crises ultimately stem from the unfinished character of the Second Russian Revolution—that is, from Mr. Yeltsin's failure to create a post-Soviet political system. A year ago, riding on the wave of elation and faith that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mr. Yeltsin decided not to dissolve the Congress and call new elections. He dallied in preparing a new constitution. He decided not to form his own party and bring the ragtag democrats together under his flag.

As a result, he is left fighting with the past. What looks like a straightforward confrontation between government and parliament is really a battle with the remnants of the old system. The Congress of People's Deputies was elected in 1990, when Russia was still part of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party was still dominant. The standing parliament, the Supreme Soviet, is elected from its ranks.

For the past year, the Congress and the Supreme Soviet have obstructed a number of key measures, including a draft constitution that would create an entirely new bicameral legislature, along with a strong executive.

Many democrats urged Mr. Yeltsin to dissolve the Congress a year ago and hold new elections. But the president's decision not to do so seemed defensible at the time. It was still unclear what was going to happen to the Soviet Union, and the autumn was filled with struggle to define a new course for the country. That issue was resolved only in December, when Russia and its two Slavic partners signed the Minsk agreement. On the heels of that momentous event, Russia was scheduled to start its ambitious program of shock-therapy economic reforms crafted by reform czar, now acting premier, Yegor Gaidar.

Alongside those practical considerations, Mr. Yeltsin's hesitation is also a product of his tendency arrogantly to rely on his personal strength to get what he wants. Instead of holding new elections, Mr. Yeltsin managed to persuade the Congress last December to grant him emergency powers that allow him to legislate by decree. Those powers were extended in April, though at the cost of slowing down economic reforms. This extra authority expires on December 1, making their extension the key issue of this gathering.

Since that first fateful decision, Mr. Yeltsin has had two options: to compromise and buy the time to push reforms through, hoping the economy will improve enough to enable him to redress his error; or to go for a frontal confrontation, dissolve the Congress, and count on his popularity.

Mr. Yeltsin holds this latter option as a sword over the head of the parliament. The rumors and denials of an imminent move to presidential rule—an ominous term which no one can exactly define—are all part of this game of nerves. Radical democrats advocate this approach, and urge the president to hold a popular referendum on the key questions of land privatization and approval of a new constitution.

But for all the bluster, Mr. Yeltsin is most likely to choose Option Number One. The democrats are too disorganized to be reliable allies, and the economy is too rocky to risk holding an election now. Moreover, things always look worst of all here in November and December, as the winter snows deepen and daylight diminishes. An election in the upbeat mood of spring would be safer.

Moreover, Mr. Yeltsin is confident he can come away from this Congress with most of what he wants—that is, that he will retain crucial powers, and reforms will remain basically on track.

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On November 14, Mr. Yeltsin hinted how he intends to do that when he spoke to a meeting of some one thousand Russian enterprise directors, largely from the military-industrial complex, who have been demanding changes in the government's radical economic reform program. He cracked the whip, saying sternly that the industrial lobby's demand for another trillion rubles in subsidies would not be fulfilled. "I don't want to deceive you," he said. "I must state clearly there will be no trillion."

The audience greeted the president's forceful speech with only a smattering of applause. But for the next ninety minutes he could be seen on the dais, chatting up Arkady Volsky, head of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, as if he had no differences with one of the most powerful critics of the current reform program.

The routine was vintage Boris Yeltsin. Mr. Yeltsin is a master at combining the imperious strength of the traditional Russian leader with the cajoling of an early-twentieth-century American city ward boss. He draws lines, cracks down on the opposition, but then looks to make deals. Most importantly, he looks always to divide his foes, isolating those he cannot work with from those he can.

POLITICAL forces in Russia today divide into three ideological blocs. The most extreme is the so-called Red–Brown alliance, a motley collection of hard-line Communist and neo-fascist nationalist groups drawn together under the umbrella of the National Salvation Front. The Front, which includes many parliament members, calls for the resignation of Mr. Yeltsin and his government, and a return to the command economy. Mr. Yeltsin, invoking his power to rule by decree, has banned the organization as unconstitutional, but its members are tenacious.

Sharing the basic economic goals of the National Salvation Front but stopping short of assaulting Mr. Yeltsin himself are several conservative factions in parliament—the state and collective farm directors who oppose the privatization of land, and state enterprise directors and workers who fear their companies will fail in a market economy. Political analysts say these organizations have enviable internal "discipline"—that is, their members will probably vote as they are told. If they ally with the Red—Browns in the Congress, they would present an anti-reform bloc that would be threatening, though not yet overwhelming.

On the opposite extreme are the so-called democrats and radical reformers. These numerous political parties firmly support the president, Mr. Gaidar, and the reform process, but have other interests that keep them from uniting into a solid bloc.

In the center stand the captains of industry represented by the Civic Union. The Civic Union brings together Mr. Volsky's industrial lobbying group with three smaller centrist organizations that have varied interests. Among them is one headed by Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi, a former Afghan war hero who fears that the demise of the Soviet Union will be followed by the collapse of Russia itself.

The Civic Union recently presented Mr. Yeltsin with its alternative program for economic reform. The program reads largely like a recap of 1970s Soviet policy: state subsidies, controlled wages and prices, centralized orders. Mr. Volsky himself, a smooth and genial politician, spent many years in the Communist Party Central Committee. "He's the quintessential Brezhnevite," warns Swedish economist Anders Aslund.

Nonetheless, it is this large and powerful group that provides Mr. Yeltsin with his most fertile field for politicking. The driving force and real potential power in the Civic Union lies in its most progressive members, who dread a return to total state planning.

A senior officer of Mr. Volsky's lobby is himself a good example. Nikolai Bekh is general director of Russia's largest truck manufacturer, KAMAZ, a typical Soviet leviathan that includes 18 plants and employs tens of thousands of workers. It was also among the first Russian enterprises to start to privatize, long before the current government reforms took effect.

Mr. Bekh's priorities, as he explained last month at two conferences, aren't to squeeze more subsidies from the government, or to re-establish a system of centralized planning and price controls—ideas that are central to the economic program that Mr. Volsky supports.

Rather, he and many other Russian enterprise directors worry most about burdensome taxes, a paralyzed banking system, and foreign competition. While they don't always favor the free-wheeling American brand of capitalism, many like the middle-of-the-road option followed in Japan or South Korea.

"We, more so than anybody else, used to bear the brunt of economic dependence, suppression of initiative, and the pressure of the totalitarian system," said Mr. Bekh. "We vote for economic independence with both our hands, for privatization, development of business contacts, the free market. However, this must be the market of equal opportunities."

Mr. Volsky has already lost the old-style industrial bosses and can't afford to alienate the new Russian businessmen. He needs a compromise almost as much as the president—who, in turn, cannot hope to win the vote on his presidential authority without Mr. Volsky's backing. The only question is the price the Yeltsin–Gaidar team will have to pay for this backing.

Radical economic reforms will inevitably be moderated. Such adaptations raise the specter of outright reversal, or at least of drifting by habit toward the patterns of old. But with Mr. Gaidar still in place and some reforms becoming increasingly entrenched, that drift should be controllable.

At least some elements of a potential compromise are already clear. The Gaidar government has already presented a new anti-crisis program which allows for selective credits and tax privileges for state enterprises. A new federal corporation would buy 10 to 15 per cent of their production, a step back to the monster Gossnab, the Soviet Union's state-controlled distribution structure. Already last spring, Mr. Yeltsin significantly eased tight money controls aimed at restoring real value to the ruble and enforcing discipline on the state-owned enterprises.

Whether such compromises in themselves endanger reforms is hotly argued. Even the International Monetary Fund seems to be shifting ground, reportedly accepting the need to retain much of the state sector for some time to come. Others, such as Mr. Aslund, warn that the hyperinflation resulting from making deals with the Volsky lobby will destroy the reforms, leading to a restoration of authoritarian rule.

But whether or not such compromises are economically defensible,

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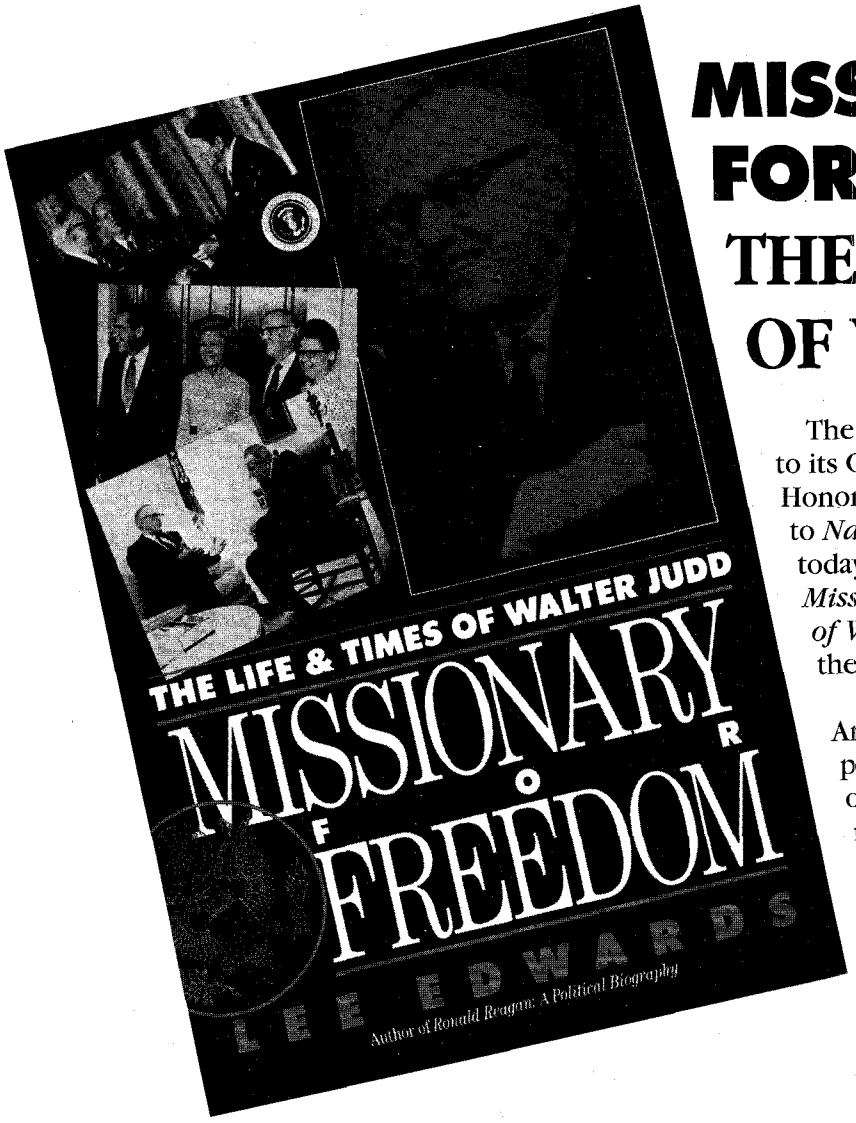

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they are politically inevitable. So long as the Russian revolution remains unfinished, the forces of the old order will remain a brake on reform. And, perhaps appropriately, the more Russia strives to become a Western-style democracy rather than another rendition of autocracy, the more politics *should* be a matter of compromise. □

Clinton in Clover

DANIEL WATTENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C.

IS BILL CLINTON going to govern as a New Democrat after all? It's still too soon to tell, but moderate, DLC-type Democrats like what they've seen so far. Naïveté? Remember that in 1976, Scoop Jackson Democrats, the immediate ideological ancestors of the New Democrats, had high hopes that Jimmy Carter's hawkish campaign rhetoric would translate into some key appointments. What did they get? As Elliott Abrams memorably put it, "One ambassadorship. Not Indonesia. Not Polynesia. But Micronesia."

In the spring of 1991, I interviewed Bill Clinton (chairman of the DLC at the time) in Baton Rouge, where he and DLC President Al From were opening a Louisiana chapter of the organization. Eastern Europe had been liberated, Gorbachev was still in power, and Clinton was contemplating a run for the presidential nomination. I asked him whether he believed that Ronald Reagan's security policies—the military build-up, the Reagan Doctrine, the anti-Communist rhetoric—deserved credit for the collapse of the Soviet bloc. And he said: "I think it had something to do with it . . . The kind of system they tried to have in Eastern Europe just doesn't work very well in the world we're living in, and as soon as the people found out just how terrible it was and what their alternatives were, it was more or less doomed. But I think precedent to that you had to have the willingness of the Soviet Union to let it happen in Eastern Europe, which I think was at least in part a function of their own internal problems, but those internal problems were certainly aggravated by the enormous stresses we put on them because of the military build-up. They had to match what we did. . . . And also the rhetoric of rolling back Communist regimes, changing the preconceived notion that once you go Communist you can never turn it back, which Reagan had something to do with, played a contributing role . . . Reagan's policies . . . certainly accelerated the trend."

Alan Nahigian

He gave Reagan more credit, I remember thinking, than George Bush had up to that time. For a guy flirting with a Democratic presidential campaign it was pretty gutsy talk. And it's worth keeping in mind in evaluating centrist Democrats' optimism about the way the early transition is unfolding.

It is still very early, and announcements of the ten or so people who will head up department and agency reviews will make things much clearer. When Mickey Kantor was busted by a coalition of Clinton campaign staffers as broadly trans-ideological as the anti-Saddam coalition, his elaborate pre-election plans for a transition that would start naming people almost the day after the election were discarded. As a result, the transition clock was wound back by about two weeks. Now, Clinton is running his own transition, and there are noises out of Little Rock that he intends to decide what his policies are first and then pick people to carry them out. If true, this could mean that Clinton is serious about ideological renewal and sensitive to the danger of mechanically filling slots with job-hungry members of Washington's liberal establishment.

Moderates are very encouraged by Clinton's choice of Al From as the transition's domestic-policy director. After making the party platform a manifesto of Clintonism as the nominee's representative on the platform commission, Mr. From had seemed to be locked up in a meat freezer throughout the campaign. A source called the appointment "very important and rather surprising, because there was a lot of antagonism toward the DLC in some quarters of the campaign." Al From's deputy for domestic policy is Bruce Reed, a policy director of the DLC before joining the Clinton campaign as issues director.

Another key appointment was that of former South Carolina Governor Richard Riley to supervise personnel selection below the Cabinet level. "Dick is a definite DLC moderate Democrat and he'll be in charge of making sure that all these sub-Cabinet appointees in fact reflect Clinton's desires," said one source. "There couldn't be a better choice." Earlier, Jan Piercey, a "search advisor" for the highly liberal MacArthur Foundation, had been named as director of personnel for the transition. The Riley appointment could mean that Piercey will be effectively put out of commission, perhaps relegated to loading the forty thousand unsolicited résumés the campaign has received into a data bank.

In 1976, the only contact that Scoop Jackson Democrats had in the Carter transition was Matt Coffey, with whom a couple of them had worked back in the Johnson Administration. When a delegation went to see Coffey, someone casually referred to then-AFL-CIO Secretary–Treasurer Lane Kirkland as one of "our guys" on foreign policy. The Jackson Democrats were not reassured when Coffey replied, "Oh. Does the AFL-CIO have an interest in foreign policy?" The vibes are better this time.

Samuel "Sandy" Berger and Anthony Lake, Director of Policy Planning in the Carter State Department, head the transition's national-security "cluster goup." A recovered McGover-

Mr. Wattenberg writes for The American Spectator.

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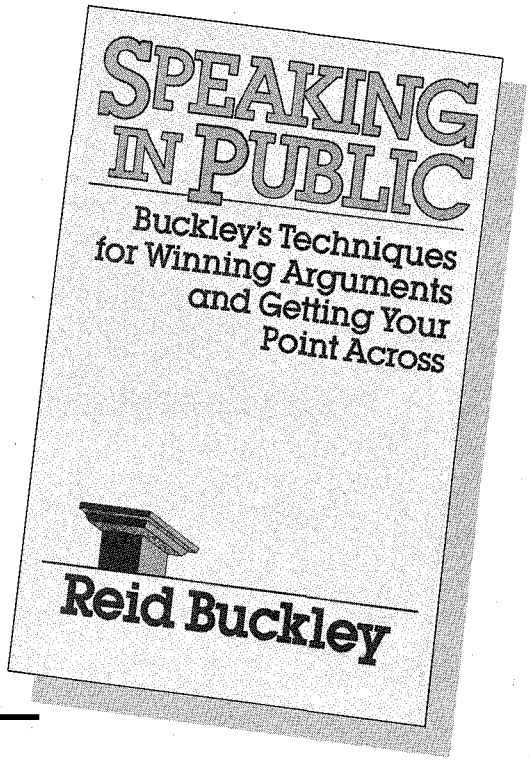

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nite, Berger is credited with reaching out to bring foreign-policy neo-conservatives like Richard Schifter, Joshua Muravchik, and Penn Kemble back to the Democratic fold during the campaign. A source says that the foreign-policy transition will be heavily influenced not so much by Democrats who were hard-line anti-Communists during the cold war as by people who come from "the groups that were involved in the pro-democracy activities —the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute, and that sort of thing." He adds: "It's going to be a pretty decent group."

At this early stage, fears of Carter II appear exaggerated. Still, Clinton's stumble in the transition's first days into embarrassing public disagreement with Senator San Nunn and the military over his intention to reverse the military's ban on homosexuals illustrates the continuing danger of insular, liberal groupthink. "The reason Nunn spoke out the way he did is that he had counseled the campaign and had been sort of ignored," explained a source. "It's a bit of evidence about the kind of problem that might arise in a Clinton Administration if they don't bring in people from a wide enough range of views to have some honest debate about these problems before they get out in public with them."

So far Clinton looks better than expected, but he is not out of the top of the first inning yet. True, he has named a couple of good people, but what is he going to do the first time the Left tries to gig one of them? Clinton looks like early JFK now, but he may end up as Son of Carter yet. If so, we can all look forward to better relations with Micronesia. □

The Sultan's Dream

ERIK V. KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN

MUSCAT

OMAN has no art treasures like Italy, no natural beauty like Ceylon, no overpowering industry like Japan, no smothering wealth like Kuwait. Yet, to the visitor, it provides a unique experience—the chance to observe a country that is brand new and yet thoroughly traditional, as close to an ideal nation as I ever hope to see.

Oman is almost like a rabbit pulled out of a magician's hat. In the cities one sees hardly a house built before 1972; the few old homes that remain have been cleverly renovated. And yet, apart from a few luxurious hotels, all its buildings are strictly in the Islamic style. There is no poverty, and education is pursued very seriously. The streets of Muscat, the capital, are so clean that one could safely eat off their surface, and one can walk around at any time of night with no fear of being mugged.

Oman is truly a dream come true. In 1970, Sultan Qaboos bin Sayid Al-Sayid came into power, and about the same time oil was found. A Communist insurgent movement, aided and financed by neighboring South Yemen, sprouted in the Southern Province, but with some outside help the Sultan defeated the rebellion. And then the total rebuilding began.

Present-day Oman is an absolute monarchy in which, however, the ruler aims to carry on a systematic dialogue with the people. He makes an extensive annual tour of the country with all his ministers to hear complaints and proposals, but he has also set up a State Consultative Council, whose members he appoints from a list of freely *elected* candidates. Is this the first step on the road to a truly parliamentary democracy? I hope not, because such a democracy would inevitably founder on ideological, religious, and above all tribal differences. The majority of Omanis are Sunnites, but over a third, including the royal family, belong to the Ibadhi sect; there are also a few Shiites. Tribally, Oman includes non-Arab Beludshis, the legacy of Oman's past greatness, when it owned a whole empire from present-day Pakistan to East Africa. Although the empire is gone, Oman still has strategic importance, dominating as it does the Straits of Hormuz.

Another advantage of Oman's not being a democracy is that its rulers' vision is not bounded by the date of the next election. They are planning for the future, including the probability that some day the oil reserves will run out. Enormous efforts are being made to irrigate the countryside and to exploit Oman's other natural resources—chromium, iron, copper, coal. In addition, much thought is devoted to Omani education. In every village (I have seen a great many) the most imposing building is the school. (Before the present Sultan took over, in all of Oman there were only two schools for boys and one for girls.) In 1986 a fine, modern university was opened in Muscat; the science departments and the medical school have the best equipment money can buy.

The students at the university are very definitely an intellectual elite. Surprisingly, for an Arab country, about half of them are women and, even more surprising to a Westerner, the majority of the women study the natural sciences, not the humanities. Actually, this should not be so surprising, since women are more given to detail and to the concrete, while men generally prefer to live in the clouds. Although Omani society keeps the sexes at a distance (in the university men and women are seated separately in the lecture halls), the ministries have a high proportion of female personnel. Women secretaries (with kerchiefs, but no longer veiled) are seen everywhere. Polygamy is on the wane, and the home is very much the woman's domain.

Katherine Trunk

Mosques abound, and the Islamic prescription to pray five times a day is

Mr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, NR's European correspondent, is currently on his annual speaking tour in the United States.

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quite strictly obeyed. The government knows very well that only a religious education provides the foundation of a moral life: hence the freedom given to the country's Christians to practice their faith and teach it to their children.

Guest workers are a very important element in the modernization of Oman. However, the government wisely wants to prevent a massive immigration of Asians such as we see in other Gulf states. In Qatar the immigrant population amounts to nearly 90 per cent, and there even the native children start to speak Urdu instead of Arabic. In Oman the guest workers from India, Pakistan, and the Philippines mostly come without a family and get a month's vacation each year, which they use to visit their relatives at home.

What are the prospects for Oman's continuing on its present, highly successful path? Will the university's increasing output of intellectuals create dissatisfaction with an absolute monarchy, however beneficent, and the demand for a more representative government? Such a development should not be expected in the near future, for a variety of reasons. These are, first of all, the lack of any such impetus in the Islamic tradition, coupled with the strength of that tradition in Oman. Then there is the strongly patriarchal mentality prevailing in the tribes, and the enormous popularity of the Sultan himself. Finally, there is the people's stake in the country's prosperity. Of course, history does not move on an even keel. But Oman's "enlightened absolutism" has the support not only of the elites, but also of the people at large (which was not the case in the Shah's Iran).

We have to bear in mind that the country as we know it today started from scratch just twenty years ago. Similar success stories are found in the Far East—Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore—but even there not in such an extremely neat and pure form. Perhaps, I dare to venture, this is because Oman is a monotheistic country with a clear vertical order, where things are simply done and not endlessly disputed. Theoretically the same should have been so in the late USSR, but there the system failed because it was based on a fundamental falsehood about the universe, including God and man. □

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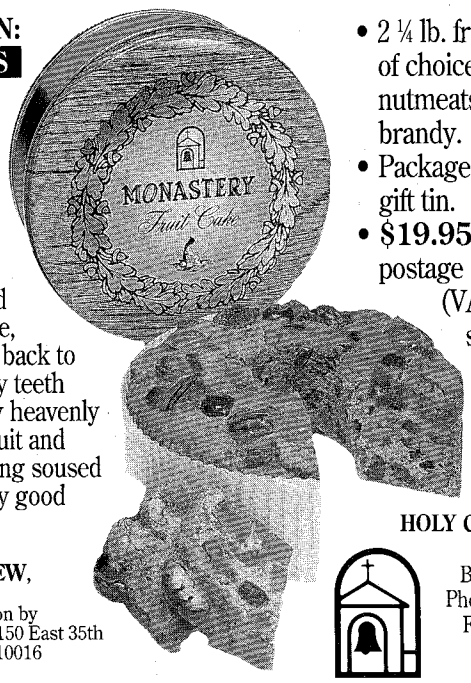

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Into the Twenty-First Century

WANTED: A NEW IMPERIALISM

It's time to stop singing those twentieth-century blues and start considering ways to secure global stability and extend prosperity. The first step: re-establish Western imperialism.

PAUL JOHNSON

MANY PEOPLE have been bitterly disappointed that the end of the cold war has not brought a new golden age of peace and increased prosperity. Looking around the world, they see approximately forty regional conflicts, some of great horror and intensity, which feed on the vast quantities of cut-price conventional weapons now available. They know there are at least thirty thousand nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union, some of which may be unleashed on the hidden arms market by economic desperation or corruption or both. They are appalled by the resurgence of violent nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe and in former Soviet Asia, in almost every community where the end of totalitarian rule has enabled popular sentiment to express itself. A huge wave of ethnic disturbances and territorial and oceanic disputes is also impending in eastern Asia. The threat of an ultimate catastrophe has been replaced by the reality and future likelihood of scores of more limited disasters. On top of this, the advanced countries are immersed in the most serious and prolonged recession in half a century, which limits their ability to come to the aid of the sixty to seventy poor nations distressed by war, famine, or economic collapse. And Europe has just witnessed its worst currency crisis since 1931. TV news makes grim viewing today, and the assumption is made that these disturbing trends will intensify over the next decade and that the early years of the twenty-first century will be characterized by alarm and misery.

I do not share this view at all, and I want to explain my reasons for looking into the future with cautious optimism. One of the most sensible precepts of the Judaeo-Christian tradition is "Count your blessings," and our most important blessing is that we have survived the twentieth century, perhaps the most dangerous century in the history of humanity. We are leaving it with the international order, which first broke down in 1914 and remained fractured until the late 1980s, at least partially restored and with good prospects of a complete recovery. Looking back, one is appalled to think of the number of occasions when the civilized world was in real danger of extinction. I am old enough to recall at least three: 1940, when the Nazi system, the most dynamic of all the ideological Frankenstein's monsters which sought to dominate our century, had overrun continental Europe and seemed poised to take over Africa and Asia too; 1945–46, when America seemed about to pull all its forces home, leaving the rest of the world to Stalin; and the mid 1970s, when the aftermath of Watergate left the United States almost leaderless and encouraged Brezhnev and his surrogates to resume taking over the world.

These were three despairing moments, and we survived all of them. Indeed, if we look at the ravages which Communist politics and economics inflicted on those areas where they were allowed full play—the sheer destruction of resources and environment, the obliteration of morality and truth-telling, the contempt for life, the ubiquitous corruption, the long-term poverty—we have to count as an immeasurable blessing that Marxism took over only one-fifth of the world. It might have been a third, or a half, or three-quarters. Supposing it had triumphed and run the entire planet by its catastrophic system of wealth-destruction. The whole of humanity would have then entered a new dark age of savagery and want.

We have escaped all that. Indeed we have done bet-

Mr. Johnson is the author of, among many other works, Modern Times *and* The Birth of the Modern.

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ter. In Europe, for instance, the chief theater of the two tragic wars which engulfed our century and of the totalitarian ideologies which made it so miserable, we now have to note two encouraging facts. First, by the beginning of this decade, Europe had enjoyed its longest period without a general war in the whole of its history. Second, for the first time every single country in Western and West-Central Europe is a democracy under the rule of law—and, despite all the difficulties, this pattern is spreading eastward. Nothing like this has ever happened before. Today, on both sides of the Atlantic, there are countless millions, born in the late 1940s, now middle-aged, always well educated and well nourished, who have never known what it was like to be without a vote or without redress against the state—and who can now look forward with some confidence to an old age undisturbed by major conflict. Our forebears would have regarded this as indeed a miracle, a fundamental change in the condition and expectations of a huge section of humanity.

Pillars of the New Wisdom

WHAT WE need to do in the twenty-first century—and we can make a start in the last years of this one—is to make it possible for this comparative and unprecedented felicity to be spread progressively to the rest of the world. This is a noble aim, and the degree to which we fulfill it will determine, in turn, the solidity of the international peace we all enjoy. The First, Second, and Third World system we became accustomed to is now dead, finished. The new plateau we seek to establish is a unitary First World, in which Western standards of living and political opportunity are gradually extended to all humanity. That plateau will rest upon what I call the Seven Pillars of Twenty-First-Century Wisdom.

The first pillar is the improvement and enlightened use of the United Nations idea. We have made a good start here, much better than anyone might have expected. The end of the cold war and the return of Russia to the civilized community of nations enabled the great-power Security Council system to function for the first time as its founders intended. We were lucky because, on the empty international stage cleared by the exit of the cold-war actors, there suddenly appeared a *diabolus ex machina* in the shape of Saddam Hussein. Had Saddam been a reluctant devil or a half-devil or a confused devil, he would not have served the purpose. But he was an unmitigated devil, an archetype devil almost in the mold of a Hitler, whose actions, in occupying Kuwait by unprovoked aggression and terrorizing its people, were unarguably evil. It was his sheer wickedness, and his unflinching obstinacy in pursuing it, which enabled the West, led by the United States and Britain, to bring the Security Council to ardent life, to secure its necessary authority, to assemble and deploy a mighty international coalition, including most Arab powers, and finally to use it successfully to reverse the aggression in a classic exercise in collective security. None of this would have been possible during the cold war. But it is equally important to note that Desert Storm marked an immense improvement over the inter-war period of the 1920s and 1930s, when acts of aggression were met only by international hand-wringing and were thus profitable, and soon imitated. The truth is, at the end of the century we have at last learned lessons about the need to use legitimate force to uphold international order, and we are beginning to apply them.

During the rest of this decade, we will be building on the foundations laid by our handling of the Kuwait invasion, and completing the process whereby an ineffectual and hypocritical General Assembly UN is transformed into what it was always intended to be, a realistic and forceful Security Council UN. We will need to recruit a more appropriate Secretary General than the out-of-date Dr. Boutros Ghali, and to increase the caliber of the UN staff. Germany and Japan should be added to the Council as permanent members, and also I think India, in virtue of its population, which will peak at 1,875 million, only marginally smaller than China's will be. The permanent members, despite some remaining ideological differences, will slowly become accustomed to working together as the "inner cabinet"

The Janitor

of the world community. Hitherto, the United States, as the sole superpower, has had reluctantly to take on the role of world policeman, while protesting it is doing no such thing. It will continue to provide the core of the enforcement process, but by the early years of the twenty-first century we will begin to see the Security Council emerge as the collective functioning agent of the policing system. That will be a giant step toward the realization of an international rule of law.

However, and here we come to the second pillar of the new wisdom, we must also transform collective security from a reactive and negative force into a true watchdog,

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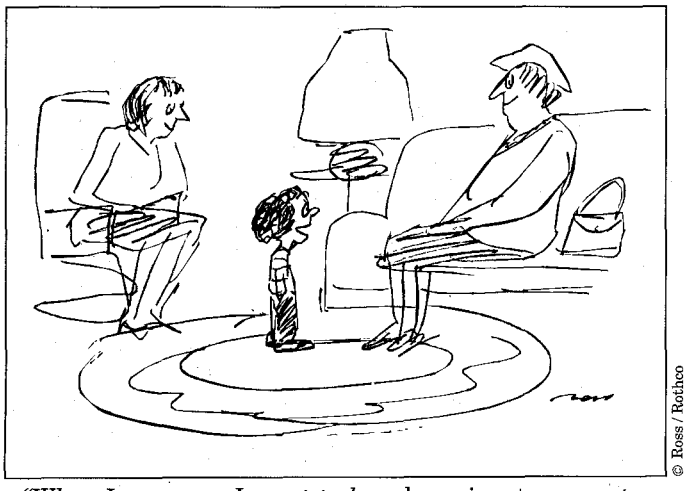
engaged in foreseeing and forestalling—crime prevention and disaster avoidance. It was good that the world was able to reverse the Kuwait outrage. It would have been better—and possible—to stop it from ever happening. Crises are almost invariably dealt with more easily in their early stages. The Somaliland famine, like the Ethiopian one which preceded it, was predictable and was in fact predicted. Countless lives and vast expense could have been saved, if a regular international operation had been mounted in the early stages, before hungry people began to abandon their homes and farms. In an increasingly overpopulated world, dealing with mass refugees becomes much harder, politically and financially. We have seen this also in former Yugoslavia, where the likelihood of huge movements of terrified or dispossessed people became obvious once the federation began to disintegrate. Intervention at this early stage would have saved scores of thousands of lives, prevented the destruction of much of the country's industrial wealth, infrastructure, and housing stock, and



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avoided the biggest European refugee problem since 1945. But the international community failed here just as conclusively as it succeeded in Kuwait. Why? Because there was no formal act of aggression breaching the UN charter, which does not deal with the dissolution of member-states.

What we will have to develop, and will develop in the next ten years, is international contingency-planning. Like the traditional great powers and their general staffs, the Security Council must learn to devise diplomatic, military, and logistical plans for all foreseeable disturbances. It will set up, as it were, a global Disaster Survey, plotting the likely emergencies and devising ways to deal with them. It will regularly update these plans, and on their basis will regularly present to member-states the levels of force, transport, and relief supplies required to meet the contingencies listed. Like any other great power, the Security Council cannot be ready for everything. But it must be ready for all predictable crises, and move in swiftly when action will be most effective. UN service will become a regular part of the careers of officials and military of all the major powers and many minor ones, until the spirit and technology of collective security becomes an integral part of their training and experience. We will cease to think of the UN as well-meaning but contemptible, and regard it increasingly as a formidable and professional instrument of world crisis-management. The UN Charter will be amended periodically, as necessary in the light of its growing experience, and a more realistic system of finance adopted. In short, if the first pillar of wisdom is a UN reborn, the second pillar is a UN which has got itself organized as a prepared and positive instrument of world stability. It will need some truly great men and women to bring about this transformation, and my belief is that it will find them.

Banish Illusion

THE THIRD PILLAR is an extension of this positive role. We must, in the twenty-first century, banish from our thinking not only the utopian ideologies that did so much harm in the twentieth, but the illusions that made their careers of destruction so easy. We cling to our belief that all peoples are ready for and can practice democracy, and maybe we shall authenticate it. But a related belief, that all people are ready for independence, has been proved illusory, at incalculable cost in human misery. Many so-called independent and sovereign states cannot function, and their peoples suffer accordingly. These include not merely quite recent creations, like Somaliland, but longer-established ones like Haiti, which goes back to the 1790s, and Liberia, which has been sovereign since the 1840s. There are at least a score of states where government cannot discharge its elementary functions of maintaining external defense, internal order, and an honest currency, and the number is likely to grow sharply. The plight of almost all Africa, after thirty years of independence, is already pitiful. It will become rapidly worse, as the peak of the population curve is reached, standards of government deteriorate still further, debt increases, finance dries up, and violence, famine, and disease fill the vacuum left by administrative collapse. A decade ago, four or five independent African states still appeared to be making progress; that number is now reduced to one or at the most two. And the one African state which has a strong First World element, the Republic of South Africa—which sustains the economy of virtually all southern Africa—is now in danger of joining the ranks of the casualties.

We have to dismiss the illusion that the African Problem is caused primarily by colonialism or demographics or shortage of credit. It is caused by government: bad, incompetent, or corrupt government—usually all three together—or no government at all. Relief operations, forms of military intervention, as practiced by the French in Chad and elsewhere, or the Belgians in Zaïre, are nothing but palliatives. And yet, the existence of inchoate states, and the violence and human degradation they breed, is a threat to stability and peace, as well as an affront to our consciences.

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The Versailles Treaty tried to anticipate and deal with this problem by the trustee system, which turned former colonies or provinces of the old German and Turkish empires into mandated territories, with the victorious powers as trustees. This system worked much better than many people have been prepared to admit in the post-1945 climate of anti-colonialism. There were some failures, like the British mandate in Palestine. But other territories, such as Tanganyika, Iraq, and Lebanon, enjoyed great stability and more assured growth than they have done since independence. We will, I believe, resurrect the trustee-mandate system in some form, if not with individual trusts then with collective Security Council ones.

Up to now, the United Nations has never once been able to tackle an African emergency successfully because it treats symptoms, not causes, often indeed the wrong symptoms. What we shall see, I believe, will be the Security Council, using one or more advanced powers as its agents, moving into the business of government, taking countries into its trusteeship for varying periods, and becoming itself an architect and exemplar of honest, efficient administration. If done firmly and confidently, such state-building will prove popular as well as successful, and will progressively eliminate many of the horrific problems that the present international communities try, belatedly and feebly, to solve. I foresee several levels or models of trusteeship, ranging from the provision of basic government almost from scratch—as is plainly needed in Somaliland now—to the provision of internal-security systems and mandatory currency and economic management. In short, the Security Council and its agents will become the last, most altruistic and positive of the imperial powers, restoring to the word colonialism the good name it once enjoyed—in Mediterranean antiquity no less than the nineteenth century.

The China Question

I HAVE NO doubt that Russia, barring an internal catastrophe, will fit well into the system of Security Council intervention and acceptance of responsibility. Indeed in some areas, such as the Trans-Caucasus, it may have to become a trustee itself. The real difficulty, in this as in other respects, remains China. It will eventually have a population not much below two billion. It is likely, by the second or third decade of the twenty-first century, to have the world's second largest GNP. And it is slowly but surely acquiring the capabilities not just of a regional great power but of a global one. Yet it is still Marxist, totalitarian, isolated, introverted, xenophobic, and, in some ways, paranoid. Thus the fourth pillar of twenty-first-century wisdom must be the redirection into positive and constructive channels of China's power to disrupt and menace the Far East.

We should not underestimate the difficulties. Anyone who has read Harrison Salisbury's recent and remarkable double biography of Mao Tse-tung and Deng Xiaoping will be in no doubt about the savagery of the regime which still holds absolute power. It is Saddam Hussein multiplied by forty. Quite apart from problems like the brutalization of Tibet, which continue, there is the difficulty of transforming a system close to Stalin's into a legitimate and acceptable form of government. Yet in some ways China remains a great civilization, and perhaps it is useful to see Deng and his associates more in the roles of a Francisco Franco or Mikhail Gorbachev, anxious to proceed progressively toward constitutionalism, than as beleaguered men upholding an outmoded dictatorship. China is moving into the world community economically, and if it can absorb Hong Kong in an intelligent and constructive manner by the end of this decade, it will become at a stroke a formidable financial power—a "have" nation, with more to lose than to gain from regional instability. I believe the difficulties raised by China's immensity and by its regime will be overcome partly by involving its rulers more and more in the new Security Council system. Peking should be given more responsibility to share, and will

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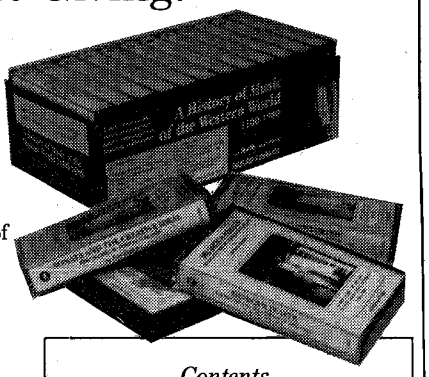

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act more responsibly in consequence. By enmeshing China in the network of duties and privileges of great-power status, we will gradually convert her from an international anomaly in a post-cold-war world into a central pillar of the new global structure of order.

War by Other Means

HOWEVER, our success in doing this will be contingent on our ability to grapple with another emergent problem. We have turned our backs on a two-world system in which mighty armed blocs squared up against each other all over the planet and used satellites and surrogates in attempts to manage the uncommitted nations. This horrible system is fast dissolving. But in the next ten years we shall see whether it is replaced by a genuine and progressive internationalism or by another divisive system. There is, as things stand, a real risk that the movement toward a free-trading world, carried on with quiet but formidable success by the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs mechanism for nearly half a century, may be halted, and that we will be divided into three giant trading blocs.

The European Community, despite its current crisis over the Maastricht Treaty, must be accounted successful in dissolving internal European trading barriers—at one level the most extensive and brilliant experiment of its kind. Yet it is still an experiment in the sense that its ultimate nature remains unresolved. Is the EC to be outward-looking, the prototype of a global trading community, expanding its frontiers horizontally by taking in more partners and, in addition, progressively lowering its tariffs to the rest of the world? Or is it to be inward-looking, a deep vertical structure, with integrated federal government and common institutions, a protectionist superpower with high external tariffs—Fortress Europe, in short? The British want the first model; the French the second, with Germany—preoccupied by reunification—wavering between the two. I believe that the next ten years will see a resolution of this dilemma in Britain's favor. This fall's failure of the Exchange Rate Mechanism and the consequent need to re-write Maastricht suggest the Community will reject high-speed federalism and concentrate, instead, on improving its existing arrangements and taking in new members, in Scandinavia and Central Europe, and eventually Eastern Europe too.

It is vital that it should take this path, for much hangs on the choice. There are already signs that the world is shaping itself into three trading systems. Inspired by the EC's example, the United States has overcome the distrust of Canada to form an enlarged market, and the two have now been joined by Mexico, to constitute the largest free-trading community in the world. As we know from Europe's example, the realization of this design is a long way off. But it is on track, and the long-term advantages of its accomplishment are so great that it is hard to see the American people, who hold the future of the project in their hands, missing the opportunity. However, if this great North American project comes into being, it will be faced with the same choice as the EC: to become a huge unit within the global GATT system, or "Fortress North America." Its choice will depend very much on which side wins the battle in Brussels.

In turn, the choices made by the two Western groups will determine the shape taken by an emerging trading bloc in Asia. We will have to get used to a world in which, increasingly, global trends will be set on that continent. The numbers will determine it. By the time Asian population growth stabilizes, six of its nations —China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Vietnam—will have a collective population of five and a quarter billion. Enormous markets will thus be there to absorb the growing economic dynamism of the West Pacific Rim, which will extend inward as the twenty-first century moves on. The old cold-war hatreds are being put aside there too, as witness the recent rapprochement between China and South Korea, and are being replaced by pragmatic arrangements. The area has all kinds of unresolved territorial disputes and unsatisfied antipathies—but then so had Europe until recently. There can be no doubt at all that the next ten years will see the emergence of regional trading arrangements. An embryo grouping already exists in Southeast Asia. Japan, which rightly views the EC and NAFTA with some concern, is sure to seek local partners if only in self-defense.

Thus, whether we like it or not, we are moving toward a tripartite world system of trade. This is both encouraging and dangerous. Encouraging, because big internal international markets make the creation of a single world market—the fulfillment of the GATT dream—inherently more likely. When customs barriers are abolished over large areas, the way is prepared for removing them everywhere. Negotiations among three parties are easier than among scores. But dangerous too. The French concept of the Common Agricultural Policy, which led to the current threats of a trade war, has been the source of antagonism between North America (and Australia) and Europe of a bitterness which recalls the pre-war failures. If the French idea finally triumphs, it will have a knock-on effect on NAFTA and on any emerging Asian group. We would then be condemned to on-going trade wars among three gigantic systems. That is a catastrophic prospect, both for the world economy and for world stability. History shows that trade wars have a depressing tendency to erupt into fighting wars. At the very least, trading antagonisms would make impossible the functioning of a creative Security Council system of the kind I have described. So, much will rest on this fifth pillar of twenty-first-century wisdom—the fashioning of trading blocs whose ultimate destiny and conscious purpose is to merge in one global system. A free-trading system which is fair and global is as important to international well-being as collective security—indeed, the two reinforce each other.

It is clear from what I have said so far that these pil-

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lars of international wisdom will depend to a great extent on popular pressure and consent, and that in turn will depend on popular enlightenment. We move here to one of the gravest problems that face societies all over the world. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when democracy was developing rapidly on both sides of the Atlantic, Thomas Macaulay observed it was a race between democracy and education. If we could educate new voters fast enough we could turn the newly enfranchised masses into responsible citizens—if not, we would end up with an empowered mob. So universal suffrage depended on universal education.

The proposition remains broadly true, and certainly we have got to educate the new billions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. But we are sadder and wiser than in Macaulay's optimistic day. We know that to will and enact universal education is not enough. We have done that. No other society in human history has placed such a strong and consistent emphasis on education at all levels as the United States has from its very inception. But there has been a failure somewhere. Prodigious amounts of money are not producing educated people in sufficient numbers. What happened in Los Angeles this June suggests that in Southern California, one of the richest societies on earth, the race is in danger of being lost. Again, the Soviet Union, with all its faults, placed huge emphasis on education. No other country ever produced graduates in such huge numbers, particularly in technical fields like engineering. But here again there has been a failure, and a more catastrophic one. The effort put into education not only bore bitter fruit in terms of the nation's capability to provide reasonable living standards for its people—it did not even produce enlightenment. Racial and ethnic prejudices, the dark forces of the human spirit, appear to be as powerful in the components of the former Soviet Union as ever. All over Eastern Europe, and increasingly in Western Europe, mobs of young people, who have been right through the universal-education mill, are ranging through the complete gamut of primitive and irrational behavior—racism, ethnic triumphalism, xenophobia, hatred of refugees. There is a universal complaint in Europe and North America that the young emerge from high school (and often from university) with only tolerable literacy, unable to write their own language well, ignorant of other languages, knowing little of their country's history, literature, and culture—fitter candidates for a mob than for a citizenry.

The consciousness of this educational failure is so general and profound that we will see, over the next decade, intensive efforts to make it good. They are already starting in various countries, including my own. And they have to succeed, because many of the developments I foresee—especially the introduction of a positive system of international law and the spread of a pattern of world free trade—are contingent on the existence and approval of an educated electorate. The next ten years must see, and I believe will see, the beginnings of a true cultural revolution, in which we make our schools and colleges more efficient so that they turn out young people not just touched by education, as at present, but permeated, penetrated by it, with the basis of a lifetime's knowledge and skills. I think we shall have to be humble in achieving this, and look to the East for example and method.

The Hidden Resource

EDUCATION is closely related to the last pillar of wisdom—making the fullest use of our resources. We have made huge strides recently in learning, for instance, how to exploit mineral resources such as oil and gold, in the most efficient manner—one reason why we have so much of both. We are beginning to treat our planet with respect, to the profit of all. The next ten years will see a rapid acceleration of these trends as we marry morality to proficiency. In the first decade of the twenty-first century the world is going to be a much more affluent place. But inanimate resources, important though they are, are not the raw material of the higher wisdom. The most vital development of the next ten years will be the improvement in the use of our human resources.

What strikes me most, when I watch TV clips of skeleton-thin victims of famine in East Africa, is not just the misery they are plainly enduring, but the profligate waste of their energies and talents—a waste to themselves and to all of us, to the world. The brains, the creativity and imagination, the sensibilities and taste of perhaps two-thirds of humanity are underused, in many millions of cases completely thrown away. All we use, at best, is their muscle-power, itself an anomaly in a world with a growing surplus of energy. As Thomas Gray, deploring the waste of human genius, put it in his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard":

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

The next ten years will see this squandering much diminished, as we find our Nobel Prize–winners coming increasingly from thrusting, vigorous countries like Malaysia, Korea, Chile, Turkey, and Singapore, and as the old sleeping giants, China and India, come fully awake. There is much gloom and doom-prediction in the world today, as I suppose is natural in a prolonged recession, and anxiety lest the end of the cold war and the disappearance of the Communist threat have brought more problems than benefits. Away with such faint-heartedness! We have survived a terrible century. That is something. We have learned many of its most important lessons. That is more. We are now poised on the verge of a great adventure in international political and economic coming-together, which can turn the twenty-first century into the period when the first global society is forged. The next ten years will see whether this is likely to happen or not. They are going to be invigorating, exciting years, and I am looking forward to them with relish. □

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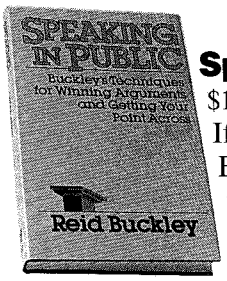

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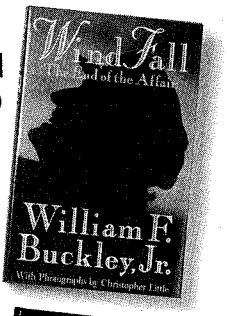

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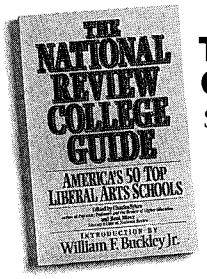

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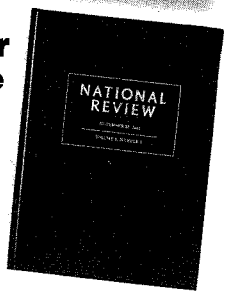

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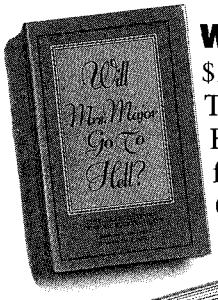

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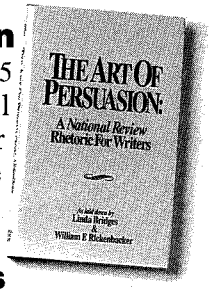

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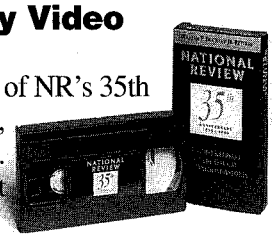

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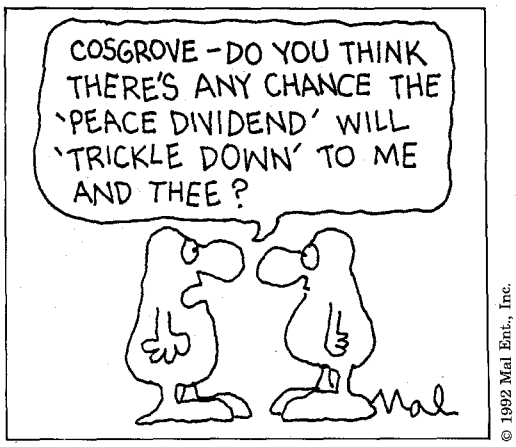

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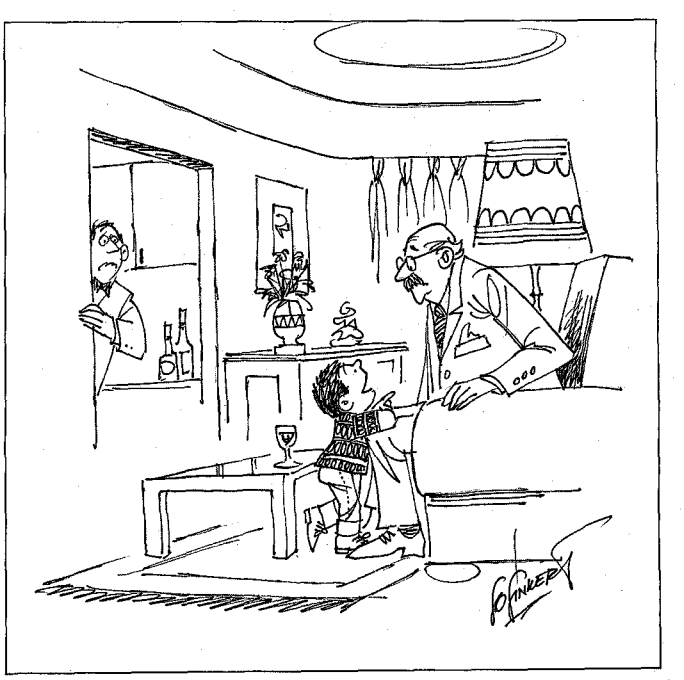
It's Try-Out Time

From woodwork and those little holes
That interest cats out on patrols,
The liberals are heading down
To Little Rock, a modest town
Where Bill and Hillary debate
Who gets a part and who, the gate,
Recalling casting calls in Plains
That gave the critics stomach pains.

W. H. VON DREELE



"You must be in a lot of pain, Mr. Ferris, 'cause Daddy says your nose is out of joint most of the time."

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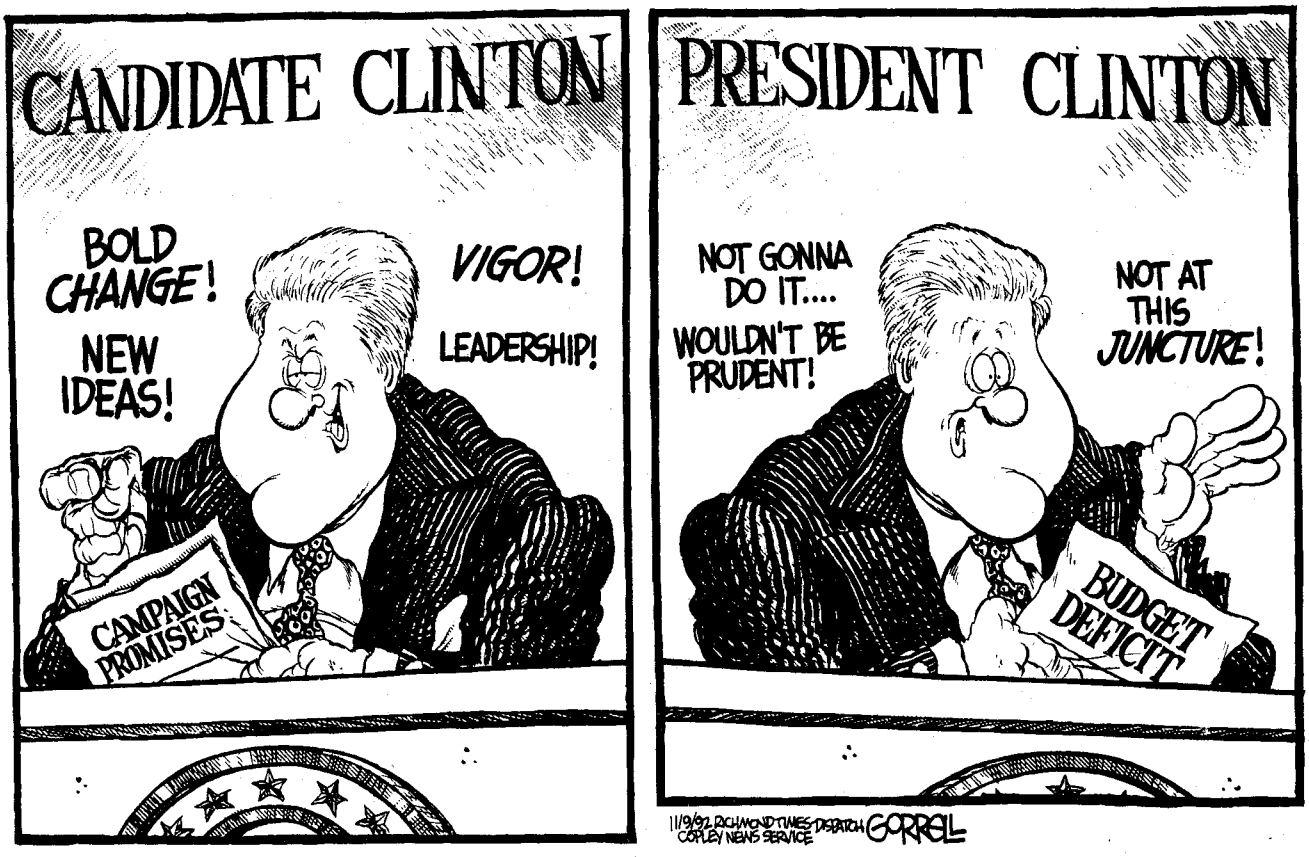

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Shattering the Glass Ceiling

STILL SEEKING A GLASS SLIPPER

There are reasons, good, bad, and neutral, why there are fewer women than men at the top of American institutions. But women who want to shatter the 'glass ceiling' had better do it the old-fashioned way.

GEORGE GILDER

LEAN BACK in your chair and look up—the ceiling is opaque, isn't it? At least it is for most of us mere men. I would like to play for the Celtics, run the software division at IBM, write eighty best-sellers like Agatha Christie, be elected to the Senate like Barbara Mikulski, summon God and make Him come like Leanne Payne. I would like to be able to debate, write numberless books, and lead national movements to victory, as Phyllis Schlafly does, while raising five children. I ogle upward at these paragons and am baffled. I do not have the slightest idea how they do it. The ceiling is not glass.

Actually, I think the problem is that for the feminists, the ceiling is a mirror. They look up at the pinnacles of the economy and see themselves in power. The fact is that in a competitive economy, nearly all high-level jobs demand singular gifts, special experience, high ambition, bold willingness to take risks. For a particular slot, there is usually not a broad selection of people available. Often, judging from my experience with small high-technology businesses, there is no one available of either sex. Headhunters earn thousands of dollars by delivering one suitable head. And each year, these high-tech firms account for a larger share of total U.S. employment.

Men too sometimes find themselves beneath a glass ceiling—shut out of a job for which they are sure they're qualified. But they have to smash the ceiling the old-fashioned way: by leaving the company and starting their own business.

These are the facts of life in enterprise. You don't get to be boss because of credentials or good behavior. You don't zoom to the top in a glass slipper. You get to the top by devoting your life to the pursuit. And at the summit the slopes are slippery. Most of the time there is no glass floor to catch you if you fall.

The new way, if you're a woman or an approved minority, is to call a lawyer, as did Barbara Sogg. She wanted to run the American Airlines LaGuardia Office. But she was "stubborn and uncooperative," according to her superiors, and she had had heart surgery. And she lacked a degree in engineering. Just the sort of person you want in control at the airport. Passed over in favor of a male engineer, she sued. An affirmative-action triple threat, she charged discrimination on the basis of sex, age, and disability, and won a total of $7 million.

Wow. There's a woman who can cut it in modern-day America. She told the *New York Times* that she hoped the verdict would "shatter the glass ceiling that has kept women from many of the top jobs in large corporations."

Rule of the Worst

OF COURSE, in some circles frequented by feminists, the ceiling is indeed transparent. On university campuses, in soft subjects, the worst rule. It is similar in government. With the appropriate norming and other skews, credentials often can prevail. But in the dreaded private sector, outside of a few plush monopolies, performance is nearly everything. When you are competing with the Japanese, there is literally no room for bias of any sort—including affirmative action. And though many people do not want to face it, it is the heavily patriarchal societies of Japan and other Asian countries that we will be competing against more and more in most businesses.

Yet the women continue to complain and sue. They want to be allotted positions at the top. They want to ride up in a glass slipper.

What is going on here? Russell Kirk explained the problem in *The Conservative Mind*: "[Our] people have come to look upon society, vaguely, as a homogeneous mass of identical individuals, with indistinguishable abilities and needs, whose happiness may be secured by direction from above, through legislation or some manner of public instruction."

Mr. Gilder, a fellow of Discovery Institute, is the author of Men and Marriage *(Pelican Publishing Company of Gretna, La.). This article is adapted from a speech for Eagle Forum.*

ILLUSTRATION BY CHANG PARK

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He is right. The problem is the sociological view: the belief in a society of monads that are all to be treated as human beings. But I have never met a human being, and I hope I never do. In this world, there are only men and women; and they are very different from one another. *Vive la différence.*

Different but Equal?

BUT IF men and women are different, there is no reason on earth to expect them to show up in comparable numbers in high-ranking jobs. There is no reason to believe that the male advantage in executive roles is an effect of discrimination. In fact, the differences between men and women overwhelmingly favor men in the positions beyond the glass ceiling.

Although there are many contrary claims and myths, anthropologists have yet to document a society in which men do not dominate the "top" jobs and do not tend to rule in male–female relations. As Steven Goldberg has demonstrated in *The Inevitability of Patriarchy*, and as even Margaret Mead admitted, there has never existed a documented matriarchy. In other words, the glass ceiling is not a cultural peculiarity of the United States, reversible by legislation. All societies ever studied have a glass ceiling.

Ellen Goodman was grousing about the effects of this fact of life as seen in the Democratic presidential primaries. Although every one of the Democratic candidates supported every conceivable form of affirmative action and civil-rights litigation, there were no women candidates. Mrs. Goodman asked why Madeleine Kunin, the former governor of Vermont, was not running for President.

Mrs. Kunin replied with the rat-race argument: "As politics becomes more and more of a bruising game, a lot of women who aren't inclined to that kind of hostility and competitiveness are put off even further.

"Sometimes," she added, "there is also a level of exhaustion among women. So many . . . have come so far and each step has been such a struggle. When it's time to step in the ring, they say, 'Hey, I've gone as far as I can go.'"

Juliet B. Schor, a Harvard economist, put the feminist argument in more general terms in a recent book, highly acclaimed, which maintains that the problem with the U.S. economy is that Americans work too hard. She protests—how like a feminist!—that one ought to get these top-of-the-line jobs on flextime, with a lot of vacations and leisure. She does not comprehend that for nearly all the men above the glass ceiling, onerous work is their life, indispensable to support their families and crucial to the success of the economy. These disdained workaholics make it possible for Juliet Schor to pursue a leisurely tenured career in Cambridge.

The winners of the jobs beyond the looking glass are precisely the competitors who push on when ordinary men and women flag. They are competitors for whom the so-called rat race is the focus of their lives. For many reasons, men are overwhelmingly more inclined to an obsessive and successful focus on career than women are.

Some of the reasons are biological. The evidence is overwhelming that men and women are genetically dissimilar in ways well beyond the obvious physical differences. Feminist psychologists Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin sum it up in *The Psychology of Sex Differences*: "1) Males are more aggressive than females in all human societies for which evidence is available. 2) The sex differences are found early in life, at a time when there is no evidence that differential socialization pressures have been brought to bear by adults to 'shape' aggression differently in the two sexes. 3) Similar sex differences are found in man and subhuman primates. 4) Aggression is related to levels of sex hormones, and can be changed by experimental administrations of these hormones."

Virtually all feminists who have considered the evidence now acknowledge these differences. But they rarely concede the obvious result: The sex that is the more competitive will tend to win more competitions.

Feminists contend that the male edge in aggressiveness is irrelevant in the modern work place, where soft skills are allegedly becoming more important. The fact is, however, that from finance to economics, from technology to market research, high-level employment is more and more oriented toward mathematical reasoning. This means that men will increasingly hold the top jobs, because they are overwhelmingly more likely to excel in math.

In a study of 9,927 exceptional students by researchers at Johns Hopkins, the mathematical portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test was administered on six different occasions between 1972 and 1979 to seventh- and eighth-graders with equal preparation. The researchers found 32.5 per cent more boys than girls scoring high in math, though the girls in the sample exceeded the average in their sex by a greater margin than the boys did. Overall, 7.8 per cent of the boys, but only 1.7 per cent of the girls, scored over 600 out of the 800 possible points, and all the scores over 760 were by boys. This difference is not peculiar to America. In recent international tests of math and science skills, boys decisively outperformed girls in math in all the 13 countries participating.

Better, Best

FEMINISTS say these differences are not important. They may accept the fact that most men are more competitive, aggressive, technically oriented, and physically strong than most women. But they point out correctly that many women excel most men in all these characteristics. Although only 4 out of 350 chess grandmasters are women, the youngest one of all time is Judit Polgar, a Hungarian girl in a family which has produced one of the other female grandmasters as well.

Nonetheless, the fact that many women are more aggressive or technically adept than most men is irrelevant to the glass-ceiling debate, which necessarily focuses not on averages but on exceptions. Competing for top jobs, women will not face average men. Women will have to excel the men whose aptitudes have led them to specialize in the particular task at hand. It does not help women chess players or wrestlers or commodity traders or microchip entrepreneurs that they might be better at these activities than me. Or better than millions of other men, including most of the men reading this article. What matters is whether they are willing and able to compete near the top male level in their field.

Reinforcing the biological differences are equally powerful cultural and psychological differences. Quite

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simply, men are dependent on earning money for their sexual role in the world. In general, without earning money, a man cannot win a woman or marry her. Although feminists claim that all this is changing, the fact is that leading feminists show no inclination to marry flower children. Gloria Steinem pursued her self-esteem with real-estate tycoons. Indeed, the more money a woman earns, the bigger the gap between her income and the larger income of her husband. Marriageable women usually demand that their men outearn them.

The sexual and marital prospects of a woman, on the other hand, are little affected by her earning power. Unlike the man, the woman has options. She can drop out of the rat race any time she wants without jeopardizing her prospects for marriage.

This difference alone would be enough to explain the different numbers of men and women beyond the glass ceiling. But marriageability is just the beginning of it. After marriage, the woman has a deep biological instinct to have children and to care for them and has a deeply respectable role as mother. On the other hand, many surveys show that a man who stays home and cares for the children wins the respect neither of his wife nor of other men. According to the sociological data, couples who switch roles for any extended period are "extremely unhappy and prone to divorce."

In competing for glass-ceiling work, even rising female education and credentials do not countervail these overwhelming social forces. A study by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin—a liberal group financed largely by the government—demonstrates a drastic difference between the sexes in the use of what they call "earnings capacity." Earnings capacity is defined in terms of age, education, credentials, experience, location, physical health, alleged discrimination, and other determinants of potential earnings. The study shows that married men of working age use 87 per cent of their earnings capacity, while comparable married women use only 33 per cent. Although the differences are much smaller for singles, the same pattern applies. The men devote more of their energies to their careers—though, because women have more credentials and are healthier, single women who work full time on average outearn single men.

For the glass-ceiling debate, however, the key point is that men with the most earnings capacity exploit it most effectively, working longer hours and more resourcefully the more education and credentials they possess. By contrast, the more education and credentials a married woman possesses, the less likely she is to work full time all year at a highly demanding and remunerative job. While the earnings-capacity utilization of married men rises from 64 to 84 per cent from the bottom to the top tenth of earnings capacity, the earnings-capacity utilization of married women drops nearly one-third, from 35 to 24 per cent, or to a level about one-quarter that of their husbands. (These figures were based on data from the 1970s, but later statistics confirm the pattern.) Women, that is, may seek education and credentials in order to work less rather than to work more. Female physicians, for example, see 38 per cent fewer patients on average than male physicians; female lawyers see fewer clients than male lawyers; female professors write fewer books and research papers than male professors.

This is in no way culpable. It springs from an entirely commendable desire on the part of women to gain more time with their families. The result, however, is overwhelming. The very women who would be best prepared to pierce the glass ceiling shy from the effort.

The fact that more men than women succeed, therefore, is not difficult to explain. What needs to be explained is the pervasive bitterness and resentment shown by many women at these obvious manifestations of the facts of life.

"Remember me telling you Phil was having his ancestral heritage researched? Well, you're not going to believe this . . ."

The Great Alibi

THE REASON, though, is clear when you think about it. All the established institutions in society today—in education, politics, the media, and the professions—tell women that they should be doing better in the job market. They know that they neither can nor want to make the efforts and sacrifices that men routinely make in order to reach the top echelons. But rather than admitting that feminism overall is a profoundly wrongheaded and unnatural theory of life, many women prefer to denounce the society. Rather than conceding that they are less apt for workplace success, many women prefer to blame discrimination.

In any workplace competition, discrimination is the great alibi for failure. We all tend to use it when we can. Conservatives talk about a huge conspiracy against them in the marketplace. Liberals talk about an establishment conspiracy against them. But only the 70 per cent or so of the U.S. population now covered as victims under civil-rights laws can actually sue.

Conservatives sometimes get this stuff wrong. The problem of glass-ceiling legislation isn't quotas; it's blackmail. No small business can afford to contest a lawsuit and few large ones want to. It's just too much time and distraction for the key personnel, the ones above the ceiling. I have seen it many times. Unless the amounts demanded are huge—in which case you go bankrupt—what you have to do if someone sues is to pay her off, regardless of the facts of the case. You just cannot continue to function as a business while undergoing a discovery process in a discrimination or, even worse, a sexual-harassment suit. The new Civil Rights Act is not a quota bill so much as a protection racket.

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For, in addition to feminists, there is one minority that benefits greatly from such laws, one group that has mostly pierced the glass ceiling already. That group is, of course, lawyers.

Unlike the lower-class clientele involved in many discrimination suits, the glass-ceiling concept focuses on deep pockets: the richest and best-positioned Americans, who can afford to pay lawyers and who work in firms which can sustain lucrative settlements. The concern is not with bias; it is with finance. But when the law itself becomes an object of entrepreneurial manipulation, the entire economy suffers. This is the real meaning and portent of the glass-ceiling debate. □

Repealing the Eighties

DEBT, LIES, AND REAGANOMICS

There's nothing frivolous about the effort to debunk Reaganomics. And almost nothing true.

BENJAMIN ZYCHER

'A MOUNTAIN of debt!" "A house of cards!" "A foundation of quicksand!" "We're stealing from our children!" Such are some of the simplistic notions used widely in efforts to deny the explosion of real economic growth attendant upon Ronald Reagan's Presidency. The ongoing myth-making has as its central features the arguments that the public debt acquired during the 1980s laid the foundation for future economic weakness, and that the Reagan economic policies encouraged the accumulation of private debt for unproductive purposes.

With respect to the public debt, the narrow myths are 1) that the reduction in marginal tax rates yielded record deficits, and 2) that the deficits were used politically to constrain social spending. The larger myth is 3) that the deficits were in some (undefined) sense far too large and therefore economically destructive. Let us consider these myths one by one.

1) Tax receipts from FY 1950 through FY 1977 averaged about 18.6 per cent of GDP; for FY 1982–89 (the Reagan budget years), the comparable figure was over 18.7 per cent. The budget years of the Carter Administration (FY 1978–81) are the real aberration: tax receipts averaged almost 19.4 per cent of GDP, largely because of the effects of inflation. During FY 1950–77, tax receipts in constant dollars grew at an annual rate of 3.8 per cent; for the Carter budget years, the comparable figure was almost 4.5 per cent. For the Reagan budget years, real tax receipts grew at about 3.1 per cent annually, but that rate was affected crucially by the recession ending in the fourth quarter of 1982. For FY 1983–89, tax receipts grew annually at 5 per cent.

The Reagan tax policies, in short, yielded revenue performance that did not diverge sharply from that of most of the postwar period. The real story is on the spending side of the budget. For FY 1950–77, outlays averaged about 19.7 per cent of GDP; for FY 1982–89, the figure was about 23.2 per cent, reflecting the rise in outlays for defense and net interest. During the Carter budget years, outlays averaged "only" about 21.8 per cent of GDP.Therefore, the growth in the federal budget deficit during Reagan's tenure was the result of the growth in outlays as a proportion of GDP.

2) According to the "12 years of neglect" school of thought, all these increased outlays went to defense, while the deficit was used as an excuse to slash social spending. With respect to this argument, the table on page 42 presents data on federal spending on poverty programs before and during the Reagan Administration. The programs subsumed in the table include Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Food Stamps, Social Services Block Grants, Head Start, various housing subsidies, the Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition program, low-income energy assistance, and others. Total transfers (cash and non-cash assistance) grew at an annual rate of about 1.6 per cent—again, in real terms—during FY 1982–89. Although that growth was less rapid than in some earlier periods, depending upon the choice of starting and ending years, it hardly provides evidence supporting the assertion that the deficits were used to cut social spending. Unless we accept the notion that the Reagan deficits were close to some size limit in terms of political acceptability, the deficits may well have *encouraged* income-transfer programs because the spending accrued to the benefit of current voters, while the future taxes needed to pay the (interest on the) debt will be borne by future voters.

3) Answering the question whether the Reagan deficits were in some sense "too large" requires that we invoke a fundamental principle of public finance: Efficiency in government spending is furthered when the costs of government programs are borne by the beneficiaries. To the extent that this principle is incorporated into tax/expenditure policy, voters have incentives to demand neither too much nor too little government spending.

In the context of the choice between current taxation and debt for federal finance, a useful assumption is that the burden of current taxation is borne by current taxpayers/voters, while the burden of debt—or of the future taxes needed to pay the interest and principal—is borne primarily by future taxpayers/voters. In short, current taxation ought to be used to pay for government spending yielding ben-

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efits solely or primarily for current taxpayers/voters, while debt ought to be used to finance spending the main benefits of which accrue in the future. Therefore, as a first approximation, debt used to finance investment (capital formation) is crudely efficient if the investments themselves yield a social return sufficiently high to justify their cost, an issue to which I return below.

Borrow and Spend

FOR NOW, let us examine the relationship between the amount of federal borrowing and the amount of federal capital expenditures during FY 1982–89. The table on page 43 shows total federal capital investment outlays compared with the federal budget deficit. As a crude approximation, the increasing deficits in the Reagan Presidency were correlated with the increase in total federal capital investment, and in particular with the investment growth in military capital. Indeed, the increase in the debt share of GDP matched almost exactly the increase in the defense share of GDP.

Let us assume for the moment that federal investment spending is "efficient" or correct in the sense that the spending earns for society a return, whether explicit or implicit, at least equal to the marginal before-tax return in the corporate sector. Over the period 1982–89, deficit spending was larger than total capital spending for five of the eight years; the reverse was true in the other three years, and the total net excess of deficit spending over federal capital formation was about $226.7 billion, an average of about $28.3 billion per year. In the strict sense of the efficient choice of instruments for finance of federal spending, therefore, the deficits were too large by about $28.3 billion per year, a figure that is trivial in the context of an economy that grew from $4.4 trillion to $5.7 trillion (in 1991 dollars).

There are three different reasons to believe that the deficits were too large during the Reagan Presidency, but they raise an issue—the optimal amount of total federal spending—distinct from the choice between current taxation and debt finance. First, no one can believe that all federal investment yields a return for society sufficiently high to justify the spending; to put it differently, the Federal Government is too big, and many of the resources used for federal investment would be more productive if returned to the private sector. (The before-tax return to investment in the corporate sector is the approximate minimum social cost of federal spending.) Second, the cost to the economy of supplying a dollar of resources to the Federal Government is far more than a dollar; the true economic cost of spending financed through borrowing is the budget cost plus the marginal inefficiency cost engendered by the tax system. The most complete estimate of that cost is that of Jim Payne, director of Lytton Research and Analysis. He judges the marginal cost of a dollar of federal revenue to be $1.65. Thus, federal investment spending is efficient only if the marginal return to a dollar of investment is at least $1.65.

Third, much of federal spending has little to do with functions inappropriate for the private sector or for states and localities. In other words, much federal activity should be undertaken at the state/local level, or not by government at all.

The conventional view that the Reagan deficits were "too large" implicitly *must* be based upon a view that the spending consumed resources that would have been more productive in the private sector. After all, substitution of current taxation for debt would not have changed the productivity of the spending, and if the spending was worthwhile for society if financed through taxation, then it was worthwhile also if financed by borrowing. Ironically, most of those arguing that the Reagan deficits were harmful argue also that federal domestic spending ought to increase. Therefore, the fundamental issue in the deficit debate is (or ought to be) the size of the federal budget: Is it in the government sector or the private sector that resources on the margin are most productive socially?

FEDERAL INCOME TRANSFERS TO THE POOR
(Billions of 1991 Dollars)

Year	Cash Assistance	Non-Cash Assistance	Total
1965	47.8	15.6	63.4
1966	44.1	21.7	65.8
1967	41.2	26.0	67.2
1968	44.0	31.5	75.5
1969	45.5	34.3	79.8
1970	46.8	38.6	85.4
1971	54.9	50.1	105.0
1972	59.7	66.4	126.1
1973	48.4	63.8	112.2
1974	51.3	66.9	118.2
1975	54.7	80.0	134.7
1976	57.8	93.6	151.4
1977	53.5	96.7	150.2
1978	49.8	85.0	134.8
1979	40.7	104.9	145.6
1980	42.7	109.8	152.5
1981	40.1	114.5	154.6
1982	36.2	103.8	140.0
1983	35.2	108.2	143.4
1984	34.5	107.3	141.8
1985	34.1	127.3	161.4
1986	34.5	112.8	147.3
1987	33.6	112.9	146.5
1988	34.3	118.2	152.5
1989	33.4	123.0	156.4
1990	32.0	129.9	161.9
1991	34.3	145.8	180.1

Source: Fiscal Year 1993 Budget of the United States Government

Private Debt

THE MYTHS surrounding the accumulation of private-sector debt during the Reagan Presidency represent the ultimate in analytic absurdity. Reaganite economic policies have been blamed for growing consumer debt used to finance frivolous consumption, for growing business debt unrelated or harmful to real economic performance, and for essentially useless financial games financed with "junk bonds" that yielded only unemployment for many workers.

Consumer installment debt grew from $455 billion (1991 dollars) at the end of 1982 to $774 billion at the end of 1989. Over the same period, personal-consumption expenditures on durable goods grew from $319 billion to $516 billion. Thus, the ratio of installment debt to consumer-durables expenditures rose slightly. Even under the (weak) assumption that the trend was in some sense undesirable, it is absurd to blame it on Mr. Reagan. Consumer debt is encouraged by high inflation, which reduces real interest costs, and by high marginal tax rates, which reduce after-tax interest costs. Indeed, the combination of high inflation and high marginal tax rates at the end of the Carter Administration yielded *negative* real, after-tax inter-

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est rates for many consumers. In this context, the disinflation and reduction of marginal tax rates under Reagan raised real, after-tax consumer interest rates, and thus *discouraged* consumer debt.

As for business debt, the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act reduced significantly the multiple taxation of saving and investment, and thus yielded an investment boom (although the 1982 Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act and the 1986 Tax Reform Act reversed the earlier law in substantial part). Accordingly, fixed nonresidential investment grew from $508 billion (1991 dollars) in 1982 to $635 billion in 1989. Expenditures for new plant and equipment grew from $455 billion in 1982 to $548 billion in 1989. Since it was eminently sensible for businesses to finance this strong investment growth with debt, external-credit-market borrowing (for the nonfarm, nonfinancial corporate sector) grew as well over much of the same period, from $71 billion (1991 dollars) in 1982 to $153 billion in 1986; this borrowing actually fell to under $46 billion by 1989.

Whether it was financed from external borrowing, retained earnings, or other sources, those arguing that the investment boom under Reagan was "unproductive" must explain the economic growth that accompanied it; and they must justify as well the implicit argument that they know better than the capital market the most socially productive investment sectors during the Reagan Presidency. Neither argument is likely to be forthcoming soon in any convincing form.

In no realm is there greater myth-making and confusion than in that surrounding the growth of high-yield ("junk") finance, economic restructuring, and attendant employment effects during the Reagan era. Those years brought massive economic shifts in terms of reduced inflation, lower real energy prices, and the technological revolution. The upshot of such changes in important economic parameters must be, and always has been, the decline of many established sectors and the growth of others, some of which are new to the economic scene.

Moreover, the 1960s, for reasons understood imperfectly, had been characterized by a wave of corporate mergers across business lines. This was justified at the time in terms of financial diversification, but such diversification can be accomplished far more easily with the simple purchase of equity than through actual conglomeration. In any event, there were good reasons to believe that the earlier merger wave had led by the 1980s to inefficient management of the conglomerates; accordingly, it was unsurprising that the market for corporate control would move to break up the firms, and thus increase shareholder wealth.

Federal Capital Investment Outlays and Deficit Spending
(Billions of 1991 Dollars)

	Capital Investment				
Year	Total Defense	Total Non-Defense	Total	Budget Deficit	Difference
1980	76.4	76.9	153.3	121.7	–31.6
1981	82.1	76.3	158.4	118.2	–40.2
1982	89.7	64.4	154.1	178.9	24.8
1983	100.2	59.4	159.6	277.1	117.5
1984	111.9	61.9	173.8	237.7	63.9
1985	125.6	65.4	191.0	262.8	71.8
1986	137.2	63.7	200.9	265.9	65.0
1987	145.6	63.5	209.1	175.3	–33.8
1988	141.2	68.1	209.3	175.3	–34.0
1989	144.1	70.4	214.5	166.0	–48.5
1990	137.6	70.7	208.3	228.6	20.3
1991	133.4	78.0	211.4	266.9	55.5
1992e	124.2	83.2	207.4	385.0	177.6

Source: Fiscal Year 1993 Budget of the United States Government
e=estimated

That trend was accompanied by the emergence of new industries in the late 1970s and early 1980s and by the creation of many new firms during the Reagan economic boom. It is large, established firms that tend to be classified as "investment-grade" by such rating agencies as Standard & Poor's; smaller firms and newer firms tend to be rated as "non-investment-grade." Until the emergence of high-yield bonds in the late 1970s, non-investment-grade firms had had to rely upon bank loans for capital, but such loans usually were short-term debts, and so were subject to fluctuations in interest rates and other financial-market parameters.

By reducing the risks of interest-rate fluctuations substantially—that is, by increasing certainty with respect to the cost of debt finance—the rise of high-yield bonds in the late 1970s brought a substantial reduction in the real cost of debt finance capital for non-investment-grade firms. That inherent advantage of high-yield securities resulted in rapid growth in the use of these instruments. From about $2.1 billion (in 1991 dollars) in 1977, issues of high-yield securities grew to $54.6 billion in 1986.

Since labor and capital are complementary inputs, it is unsurprising that the growth in the use of high-yield securities by non-investment-grade firms was accompanied by a dramatic expansion in employment by those firms. While employment in the Fortune 1000 fell by about 2 million during 1977–1986, employment in non-investment-grade firms grew by 17.3 million. In the decade (1968–78) before the widespread use of high-yield securities, total employment among non-investment-grade firms grew on average by 1.3 million per year. For the Fortune 1000 the figure was 383,000. The figure for non-investment-grade firms increased to 2.4 million per year during 1982–89 even as total employment fell in the Fortune 1000 by 769,000 annually. In short, the Reagan economic boom carried with it a dramatic increase in employment, much of it owing to "junk" bonds.

Real-Life Laboratory

THE EMOTIVE nature of the term "debt" is tailor-made for those interested in diverting attention from the pro-market policies of Ronald Reagan and the resulting economic prosperity. The plain reality is that the late 1970s on the one hand and the early and mid-1980s on the other provide as close to a controlled experiment in the effects of divergent economic policies as modern democracy is ever likely to engender. For those interested in the advancement of human welfare, the myths about the Reagan years are as damaging as they are dishonest. □

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Media Watch

WHOSE CHOICE?

School choice has its natural opponents. Hint: they're *not* black parents.

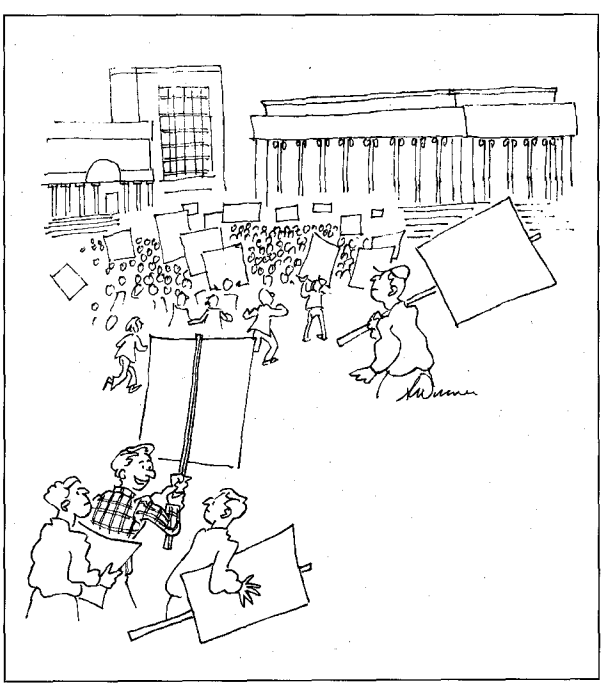
JOHN J. MILLER

IF YOU harbor even the slightest doubt about media bias, examine the case of the report on school choice issued by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Although a final version of the study will not become available until later this year, its promoters released draft copies and executive summaries to the press on October 26—eight days before the election and just in time to help discredit an issue touted by President Bush, and to defeat a Colorado ballot initiative which would have created the nation's broadest school-choice program.

The *New York Times* splattered a story on the Carnegie study across its front page ("Research Questions Effectiveness of Most School-Choice Programs"), and the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and many other newspapers gave it respectful coverage. Granted, the Carnegie study is by no means solely responsible for what happened in the presidential election or even in Colorado, but the non-critical promotion of this document points to the enormous power of the opponents of school choice.

The report is so obviously biased and flawed that one hardly knows where to begin—so let's take the first two sentences: "The decade-long struggle to reform American education seems suddenly to hang on a single word: 'choice.' Just a generation ago, freedom of choice was the rallying cry of those who clung to their self-proclaimed right to attend single-race schools." Nice association. Critics of school choice like to allege that a voucher plan would lead to increased racial stratification, with suburbanites using vouchers to help send their children to all-white enclaves. Inner-city parents, meanwhile, are supposedly left with cheap and predominantly black private schools and an already rotten public-school system.

No real evidence reinforces this accusation. Black Americans, indeed, are among the strongest boosters of choice—88 per cent approve of a private-school voucher plan, according to a recent survey conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. The tale of Polly Williams, the radical black Wisconsin state representative, and her battle to implement a choice program for Milwaukee youngsters is now widely familiar. In fact, vouchers would encourage a racial commingling that does not occur in our present neighborhood-based public schools. A walk through the hallways of urban parochial schools will reveal some of the most diverse student populations in the country. Moreover, many voucher programs are means-tested for low- and middle-income families, and most choice plans include non-discrimination clauses. Parents who cannot otherwise afford to remove their children from the public-school system would ultimately gain the most. Despite all this, the Carnegie report shamelessly tosses off its allegations of racism.



"This is the part of college I like the best."

The aspect of the report which has garnered the most attention is the claim that most Americans do not favor voucher programs. According to Carnegie, 62 per cent oppose them. This directly contradicts a wealth of polling data. For over twenty years, Gallup has asked this question: "In some nations, the government allots a certain amount of money for each child's education. The parents can then send the child to any public, parochial, or private school they choose. This is called the 'voucher system.' Would you like to see such an idea adopted in this country?" Over the course of two decades, support for the voucher system has slowly risen, reaching 70 per cent this year. A Harris poll recently conducted for *Business Week* showed 69 per cent support for a means-tested private-school-choice program. An Associated Press survey found 63 per cent approval for President Bush's "G.I. Bill for Children," which would provide $500 million to fund several school-choice demonstration sites. Unlike these surveys, however, the Carnegie report restricted its questions to parents with children in public schools, ignoring everyone else.

Another highly publicized Carnegie poll claims that 82 per cent of Americans would rather support existing public schools than try a market approach. But what the survey question asked was whether respondents more closely identified with Mr. Smith, who would give "every school the resources needed to achieve excellence," or with Mr. Jones, who would "let schools compete with each other for students." Tenden-

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tiously, the question posits an either/or situation: one can have either widespread educational improvement or a market system in which certain schools will improve and others will shut down. The possibility that competition will cause general improvement is not allowed.

The deeper one delves into the report, the worse it looks. Joe Nathan, an education expert at the University of Minnesota, counted 64 "misstatements, serious omissions, and major distortions" in chapter four, which focuses on statewide public-school programs like the one Nathan helped create in Minnesota. For example, the report suggests that school choice has not dramatically increased the number of Minnesota's college-level advanced-placement courses—the number of schools offering such classes, it says, has risen only from 125 to 147 since 1989. There are three problems with this analysis. First, the report uses the wrong base-year: the law which spurred much of this change was implemented in 1985, not 1989. Second, the number of actual AP classes—as opposed to the number of schools scheduling them—has more than doubled since the 1984–5 academic year. Third, the report does not mention the 46 schools which now provide over 130 classes worth college credit through the University of Minnesota.

The report goes on to claim that most people who take advantage of choice do so because of convenience rather than academics—for example, to attend a school closer to home. The report neglects to mention that Minnesota's choice program made possible cross-district transfers that reduced some commutes from 14 miles to only a few blocks. When students have to travel long distances each morning and evening, everything suffers—academics, extra-curricular activities, parental contact with teachers. To call such transfers a matter of "convenience" is extremely misleading. (And, again, opposed to previously established data. A report issued by the Washington-based Policy Studies Associates in October, for instance, found that among Minnesota parents taking advantage of school choice, academic concerns had more influence than matters of convenience.)

The report also critiques a Milwaukee program which it repeatedly calls "the nation's only private-school-choice plan." Yet the nation actually has several private-school-choice plans. Milwaukee, in fact, has two: the publicly funded one Carnegie refers to, and a much larger, privately funded program. An admission of this is buried in the 118-page document, but Carnegie thinks it can dismiss everything not paid for by taxpayers. Yet as Michael Heise, a research fellow at the Hudson Institute, says, "The source of the dollar is not terribly important": what matters is how the program works. And, although specific data on student achievement are not yet available, the private-school-choice programs in Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and San Antonio—all larger than the one analyzed by Carnegie—are extremely popular among parents.

The report's most serious offense, however, is propagating the notion that enough choice programs have been around long enough to warrant a study which boldly proclaims them a sham. This assessment, at best, is remarkably premature. Nevertheless, the report will accomplish its primary political goals and serve as an easy reference point over the next several years (the next showdown: June 1994 in California) for lazy journalists and commentators who don't want to find out exactly what's at stake in this debate. □

Using Magic

WHAT CHILDREN SHOULDN'T KNOW

In explaining how to avoid AIDS, Magic Johnson and Linda Ellerbee tell kids much that isn't so.

MARGARET LIU McCONNELL

AT THE outset, *A Conversation with Magic* seems the kind of show any parent would welcome. What a relief that Nickelodeon, home of *Lassie* and *The Little Koala*, came up with this "special edition"—produced during the months Earvin "Magic" Johnson spent as a "spokesman for the AIDS virus"—to teach children about AIDS! And what better person than Magic to answer whatever questions a group of ordinary children might have on this difficult subject? Magic is adamantly heterosexual and has a religious grounding that allows him to talk easily about God. He was called a hero by President Bush and had been appointed to the National Commission on AIDS.

Johnson had been championed for the appointment by AIDS activists ostensibly because of his potential to reach city teenagers. But it was his appeal to more general audiences that was of most use to those intent on convincing the public that we are all at risk.

In the video's opening moments, settled comfortably amidst a dozen children, with producer Linda Ellerbee practically at his feet, Magic talks of God giving him strength and about his love for his wife and their baby-on-the-way. He conveys a natural respect for the children's innocence with his gentle, delicate manner.

No wonder the video was so well received at its debut in March. After playing on Nickelodeon to high praise from the press, it was distributed to PBS stations across the country, which were equally enthusiastic.

But the show is not as sweet, or as safe, as it seems. Linda Ellerbee starts by telling parents that their children will be seeing an "unscripted, unrehearsed conversation" between a

Mrs. McConnell lives in New York City and has written for Commentary.

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group of kids and Magic Johnson. In fact, because of her various interventions, the program assaults its young audience with frank discussion of sexual intercourse as though AIDS must claim childhood itself as its victim.

Consider the condom demonstration. Miss Ellerbee takes the children through a series of Socratic questions during which it emerges that "pretty much" the only ways one can get the virus are needle sharing, as a baby born to an HIV-infected mother, and from "unprotected sex." Which leads to the obvious question from a very thoughtful little girl about what exactly "protected" sex is.

In response, Miss Ellerbee thrusts second and third fingers into the air and draws a condom down over them:

> LE: . . . You roll it down the penis and that protects the man when his penis is inside the woman's vagina. It protects him during sex. And it protects her. It's not 100 per cent. The only 100 per cent way to protect yourself for safe sex [*sic*] is to not have sex.
>
> MJ: That's right. [He seems uncomfortable, clearing his throat several times.] . . . The safest sex is no sex and until you're married or something you should be thinking about not having sex.
>
> LE: . . . nobody is saying, Hey kids, now you know how to wear a condom you should rush right out and have sex. The truth is you shouldn't. . . . What we're saying is that there's going to come a day, when you grow up some, and you may—if you choose to have sex then, then you should know you're not immortal.

This is all spoken very sweetly, particularly Miss Ellerbee's homey locution, "There's going to come a day, when you grow up some." The trouble is, the "some" is left entirely up to the children to decide. A good many adolescent boys would begin having sex the moment their hormones kick in. This obsession of young men is an age-old phenomenon, and its counterpart has been the age-old obsession of parents with ensuring their daughters' safety. The condom theory would have it that a simple sheath of latex will change sexual intercourse into something no more consequential than a game of ping-pong.

But disease and pregnancy are not all one becomes vulnerable to through sexual activity. Girls especially are vulnerable to exploitation, to being hurt emotionally, to losing self-esteem before even having had the chance to build a sense of self. Now comes Linda Ellerbee telling children, "Remember you have a right to know the answers. You can ask your parents. You can ask the school nurse. You can call information and ask for the state department of health."

But this offhand rejection of parents' primary responsibility—and right—to instruct their own children in such matters is not the only harm this video does. At a critical point, Linda Ellerbee makes a major error:

> If you practice unsafe sex, you may get HIV, doesn't matter who you are. If you share dirty needles, you may get HIV, doesn't matter who you are. *Any action that allows blood from one person to get inside another person's body can transmit the virus.* It's not what group, it's what behavior.

The children are then treated to a rap video by Scar.

Are these children to conclude that sex is some kind of bloody fracas? Miss Ellerbee's statement is true but incomplete: the virus also travels in semen and vaginal fluids, and this is how it would most likely be passed during sexual intercourse.

But the children can't fill in the missing information themselves: that HIV-infected white blood cells found in blood, semen, and vaginal fluids can be absorbed into the body through cuts or through mucous membranes, the spongy cells that line, inter alia, the mouth, the vagina, the opening at the tip of the penis, and the rectum, and which in the rectum are thin and prone to fissures. Do we really want to get into all this with eight- to twelve-year-olds? Of course not. But without this information it cannot be understood just what the condom is doing, or why gay males are a high-risk group. The condom must seem to young children a magical shield.

It's tempting to accept the proposition that, because children will probably start having sex earlier, we should simply give them condoms and hope they'll be "safe." But a better way to keep children safe is for parents to maintain high expectations of their children's capacity for self-control, to give them access to information at appropriate ages, and to impress upon them that now more than ever it is better to wait. It is possible to teach teenagers in detail about how the HIV virus is spread, without giving them the sense that all of society expects them to start having sex before they finish school.

Death Sentence

THE emotional climax of the video is the revelation that two of the children in the group are HIV positive. Shaking, hardly able to look up, hardly able to get her breath, she's so very scared, a lovely girl of about eleven reveals her secret to the world. Pressed by Miss Ellerbee to talk about her feelings, she says she's afraid her friends won't play with her any more or hold her hand. Next, a little girl who looks no more than six pleads, "I want people to know we're just normal people," then breaks down, wiping tears away with the back of a chubby hand. The cameras focus in on the little girl crying while Magic tries to comfort her.

The essential lie of the program is that because there are children who are HIV positive we must teach all children to protect themselves. But no quantity of condoms would have kept Rachel or Hydella "safe." They were not exposed to the virus through unprotected sex.

The producers of the show might argue that this was not their intention at all. But why then, in this "unscripted, unrehearsed conversation," is this heartbreaking catharsis immediately followed by this taped question over which the producers have total control: "Magic, what message would you give to people who think, 'This could never happen to me'?"

> Well, my message to them, that it can happen to you and I'm a prime example of that . . . it happened because I had unprotected sex.

Children who are not born to HIV-positive mothers and who have not had blood transfusions are not at any significant risk for HIV until they become sexually active. Drilling into children the idea that they are at risk must only drill into them the idea that we fully expect them to become sexually active.

To use the suffering of two very scared children who are going to die, in order to instill in other children the idea that they have the "right" to autonomy from their parents, is surely one of the lowest points the liberal media have yet achieved. □

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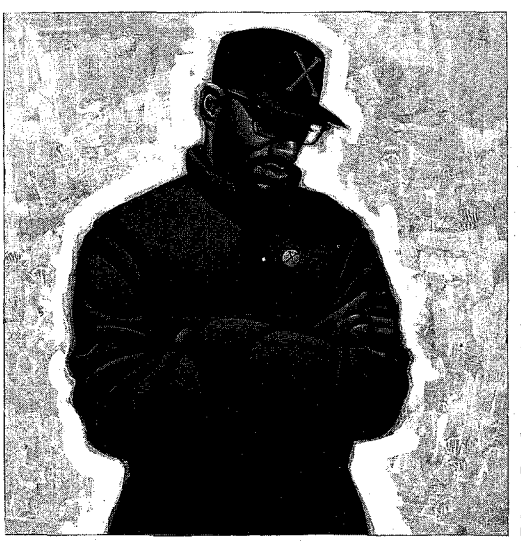
Bad Rap for Malcolm X

CAROL IANNONE

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, often heard in the months leading up to the release of Spike Lee's movie, has paired Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X in a kind of good cop/bad cop formulation. King, it's said, preached love, integration, and nonviolence; Malcolm X preached hate, separatism, and violence. If the country doesn't wise up and achieve equality as King proposed, the wisdom goes, then blacks will follow Malcolm X's directive and do it "by any means necessary." Sometimes, especially more recently, the convention is altered to hold that the country has already failed to take King's way and that Malcolm X's is in the ascendancy, witnessed in such phenomena as the angry, swaggering style of ghetto youth; the popularity of rap music, replete with threatening, often murderous lyrics; the intimidating mode of black politics practiced in many large cities; and, of course, South-Central Los Angeles.



Roberto Parada

In either version the formulation is inaccurate on some important points. True, Malcolm X can in some ways be seen as the progenitor of the whole model of black activist behavior that we see today, marked by provocation, confrontation, Afrocentrism, and the excoriation of the white race. Furthermore, Malcolm X often characterized as "Uncle Toms" those blacks who sought a road of moderation and accommodation, setting the stage for the situation today in which any black who doesn't agree with the militant line can be denounced as a traitor to the race.

But what we now have is the worst of Malcolm X, while the best of him has been conveniently discarded or overlooked. He always insisted, for example, that black people had to realize that along with equal rights there had to be "the bearing of equal responsibilities." According to *Remembering Malcolm* (Carroll & Graf, 208 pp., $21), a moving memoir by Benjamin Karim, who was one of Malcolm X's assistant ministers at New York's Black Muslim Mosque Number Seven, Malcolm X felt that blacks "had to bear some of the blame for their own unenlightenment. You can blame a person for knocking you down, Malcolm often said, but you can't blame that person if you refuse to get back up. . . . However much slave history taught us about the injustice and misery we as a people had suffered, it did not excuse us from assuming responsibility for ourselves and each other by altering its course."

Malcolm X's own struggle out of the humiliations, deprivations, and various hellish detours of the underclass—welfare, reform school, hustling, pimping, alcohol, drugs, crime, and finally prison—taught him the paramount necessity of self-respect and mutual respect among blacks. Moreover, Malcolm X understood how blacks preyed on each other like "animals and vultures" in the ugly black underworld. His autobiography tells of his poignant amazement at witnessing the respect with which black people had learned to treat each other in the Muslim movement. Karim's summary of Malcolm X's message to his followers is this: "Be honest. Harm no one, and take nothing that is not yours. Treat others as you would be treated by them. Practice charity. Exercise self-control. Avoid extremes, keep a middle path. Pay your taxes. Obey the law." With such teachings, Karim says, Malcolm X "rescued us from the myth of our moral inferiority."

And whatever his contribution in creating it, ours is not a world Malcolm X would have been at home in. Twelve years celibate before his marriage, he would have been dismayed at the distribution of condoms to children. The faithful husband and devoted father would be horrified at black men making babies and leaving them to the care of the white man's state. The slovenly and disordered appearance of youth today, black and white, would have appalled him, as would their language, and the language of rap; he abhorred profanity and even the use of slang words like "kid." Malcolm X, who always dressed impeccably in the grownup masculine style of the 1950s and early 1960s, and couldn't stand to see a Muslim brother with his collar and tie loosened, would have disdained running shoes, baseball caps, and oversized T-shirts with Xs on them.

And Malcolm X loved learning. Affirmative action and curricula based on "self-esteem" might well have broken his heart. In prison, he copied out the entire dictionary, word for word, including punctuation, and read so much in bad light that he had to begin wearing glasses. ("Any college library would have been lucky to get that collection," he later said of his prison's library.) His excitement at reading, at learning, at taking possession of ideas, is something you can almost taste in his autobiography. Karim reports that Malcolm X once mused ruefully, "How many dictionaries and reference books do you suppose we would collect if we went through a black housing project in New

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York? Enough to fill a car trunk or van? Or maybe a suitcase?" Karim continues in Malcolm X's voice, "We can't blame the white man for the dictionaries black children don't have. Poverty, said Malcolm, provides no excuse for ignorance any more than history does. Ignorance breeds poverty, he said, it's not the other way around." For their classes at the mosque, Malcolm X's Muslim students were expected to have a notebook, a dictionary, a thesaurus, a book of synonyms and antonyms, an etymology text, and a library card. They were given extensive study assignments. In addition, Malcolm X encouraged the Muslims to use their spare time creatively, to go to museums, for example, instead of sporting events. In fact, as some have noted, his whole post-prison disposition was rather puritanical, deliberately repudiating the looseness and ease that had come to be associated with some segments of black life in America.

MALCOLM X was also ruthlessly honest, and he would never have been able to endure the sea of lies about race that we swim in today. "He didn't blame white people for their resistance to integration with the Negro *as he lives today*," according to Charles W. Wiley—a political activist and journalist who had made his acquaintance—writing in NATIONAL REVIEW almost thirty years ago. "He said that a white person who pretends that property values don't go down when Negroes move into a neighborhood is a fool, but that when a white man tells the truth about such issues he is called a bigot." Malcolm X often embarrassed liberals by proclaiming, for example, that the Sixties were "an era of hypocrisy. You pretend that you're my brother and I pretend that I really believe you believe you're my brother."

Malcolm X knew that "pie-in-the-sky promises of equality through passing laws" would not work, that laws could not change attitudes. He predicted that riots would follow the passage of civil-rights legislation, when the entire civil-rights leadership thought that such legislation would solve the whole racial problem. And he was right. "A hungry man will *dislike you* if you refuse to give him help," he told Wiley, "but will *hate you* if you promise help and give him a check that bounces." He was not talking so much about actual food as about spiritual food, black people's need to feel and be accepted in the fullness of their humanity, something he believed they could not get from sitting at lunch counters and singing "We Shall Overcome." Malcolm X knew that the ghettoes contained the explosive and lethal rage that he remembered from his own past, although he would not have confused it with political protest. His much-vaunted belief in violence was really only an assertion of the need for self-defense when the government fails to protect certain citizens.

During the period of poverty and dysfunction that followed his father's death, Malcolm X resented the official intervention of state welfare agencies into his family's life, but the reader of his autobiography cannot help being struck by how relatively humane and well intentioned this intervention was; and the reform school and foster homes Malcolm X was sent to were by no means a Dickensian horror. What the state agencies could not provide is, alas, what no state can: dignity, self-respect, a tranquil affirmation of the rightness of one's fundamental self. Palpable in Malcolm X's autobiography is his own search for wholeness, a search which was not fulfilled until his pilgrimage to Mecca, "the first time I had ever stood before the Creator of All and felt like a complete human being." After this experience, Malcolm X dropped much of his racist and separatist rhetoric and was able to declare, "I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity *as a whole*."

One of Malcolm X's daughters has said that her father has never really been understood, and a new collection of essays by black writers, titled *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* (St. Martin's, 246 pp., $18.95), supports her assertion. Indeed, as the subtitle indicates, these writers may not even be trying to understand him on his own terms. Some of the essays are concerned with discrepancies in Malcolm X's biography; sometimes this concern is legitimate but sometimes it seems to be merely by way of claiming him for one or another cause. Quite a few of the essays are preoccupied with Malcolm X's possible and actual violations of political correctness. One faults him for criticizing the ghetto style of his hustler days too much, for failing to recognize it as a form of rebellion against racist America. Some fret about what they see as his excessive puritanism. Others worry over his "sexism" and "homophobia." Some try to make him into a proto-feminist or Marxist. The last essay is told by a student at Spelman College named Deidre Bailey to a couple of black journalists. She is a young black woman we may hope to hear more from in the future. Her understanding of Malcolm X's legacy is his respect for women and his example that one can, by conscious choice, change one's life for the better. She deplores a lot of the "X" phenomenon and the association of Malcolm X with hatred and random violence.

AS MALCOLM X has been given a bad rap on some scores, Martin Luther King has perhaps been overidealized. In an ironic way, King may be more responsible than Malcolm X for the enmity in black–white relationships today. "Let us therefore continue our triumphant march to the realization of the American dream," said King in one of his brilliantly ringing addresses. "Let us march on segregated housing until every ghetto of social and economic oppression is dissolved and Negroes and whites live side by side in decent, safe, and sanitary houses. Let us march on segregated schools until every vestige of segregated and inferior education becomes a thing of the past. . . . Let us march on poverty . . . until no starved man walks the streets of our cities and towns, in search of jobs that do not exist. Let us march on poverty until the wrinkled stomachs in Mississippi are filled . . . the idle industries of Appalachia are . . . revitalized, and broken lives in sweltering ghettoes are mended and remolded."

These were the kind of words that young people in the Sixties thrilled to hear. Taken inspirationally and motivationally, they are wonderful; taken absolutely literally, which is apparently how they *were* taken, they are a recipe for disillusionment and despair. Even Jesus said that we would always have *some* poor with us. Martin Luther King set the goals so high that America had no way of achieving them, and today's angry, never-satisfied liberals, both white and black, may well have learned their disenchantment and disgust with their country from just this style of rhetoric.

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Conservative and traditional civil-rights thought often protests that King's legacy of color-blind justice and equality of opportunity has been forgotten or distorted by subsequent black spokesmen, but in truth he seems to have left them plenty of ammunition. If, after the passage of the civil-rights laws, King escalated the moral demands he placed on our society, he also began to de-emphasize the only real way by which they could at least partly be achieved: by the assumption of individual responsibility. In many ways Martin Luther King was a privileged middle-class liberal as much as he was a black. One good look at the black underclass in the North after the Watts riots of 1965, and he began to speak of the need for massive government intervention at every level, redistribution of income, and the restructuring of American society. He who had prophesied black–white brotherhood began to speak of America as a "sick society" and to insist "that the vast majority of white Americans are racist, either consciously or unconsciously."

After Watts, according to James H. Cone, author of *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Orbis Books, 358 pp., $22.95), the anti-capitalist sentiments of King's graduate-school days combined with his new-found admiration of Sweden to bring him to the point of advancing socialism as the solution for America's black underclass. He began to challenge many of his own advisors who were strongly pro-capitalist: "We've got to begin to ask questions about the whole society," he insisted. "We are called upon to help the discouraged beggars in life's marketplace. But one day we must come to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. It means that questions must be raised. 'Who owns the oil?' . . . 'Who owns the iron ore?' . . . Why is it that people have to pay water bills in a world that is two-thirds water?' "

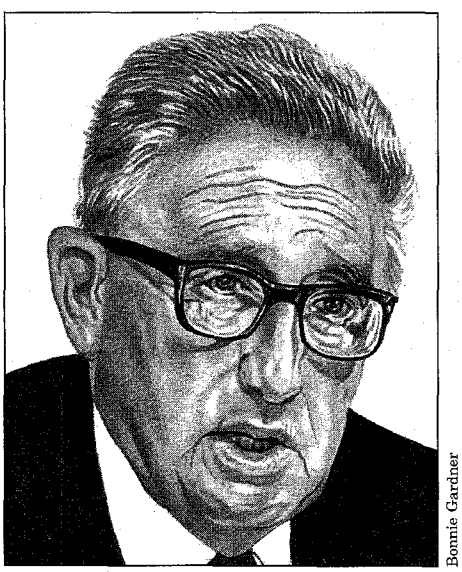
A recent article in *The New Yorker* reported critically Malcolm X's common-sense observation from his Middle East experience—that even without racism, people of the same kind tend to flock together. This sort of observation is an embarrassment to the utopian universalism according to which we can never call ourselves a just society until each and every area of life is proportionally integrated; anything short of that represents pandemic racism that must be rooted out by endless agitation. "We must all learn to live together as brothers," said Martin Luther King. But Malcolm X understood that "no government laws can ever *force* brotherhood." "Men are attracted by spirit," he said. "Love is engendered by spirit. . . . The only true world solution today is governments guided by true religion—of the spirit." The conventional wisdom sometimes asserts that we've lost King's dream and are now living Malcolm X's nightmare, but perhaps it's not Malcolm X's nightmare that we are living, but King's dream turned into a nightmare, like all the utopian dreams of this century. And maybe it is Malcolm X who can wake us up. □

The Great Game

ANTHONY HARTLEY

DIPLOMACY is a profession that produces its own type of human being. The great diplomatic players—such as Talleyrand, Metternich, Bismarck—have something in common. A cold eye cast on power, a lack of moral prejudices, an appreciation for balance and stability in the international system—these are the attributes that mark them. They are not men of conviction, but the reverse of good fellows. Bismarck used to regard it as disloyalty to the King of Prussia if he allowed himself to like a foreign leader or country.

Kissinger: A Biography, by Walter Isaacson (Simon & Schuster, 789 pp., $30)



Bonnie Gardner

As seen by such men, the game was one of *raison d'état*, but this was a point of view that took into account the legitimate interests of other states, which were seen as facts to be heeded rather than obstacles to be overcome. The objective of such diplomacy was the avoidance of damage rather than the furtherance of good; perhaps this is the most that mere diplomacy can expect.

Kissinger had this cast of mind. He was a great foreign minister—his position in the Nixon Administration was tantamount to that even before he became secretary of state. In 1969 the United States was faced with fighting its way out of the impasse into which the efforts of previous Administrations—not least the soaring ambitions of the Kennedy years—had led it. When Richard Nixon took office, with Kissinger as his national-security advisor, the United States was losing the war in Vietnam. It was Kissinger's task to find a way out of Vietnam that was not too humiliating and not too destructive of America's credibility. He did it, but there was no elegant way of retreat. The path out of Vietnam was unpleasant and devious. Kissinger was clear that the war must end, but in a way that would not leave America's allies or enemies with the impression that the country had been crippled by the experience.

Much of Kissinger's activity, therefore, was devoted to impressing on the Soviet Union that the United States could still stand up for itself. In this he succeeded, most notably in the Middle East during the threatened Syrian invasion of Jordan in 1970 and the Yom Kippur War in October 1973. Had it not been for the Watergate affair and the subsequent trammels laid on the executive branch by Congress, the rewards of this achievement would have been greater. America would have resisted more actively the

Mr. Hartley published a study of the foreign policy of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, for the International Institute of Strategic Studies, in 1975.

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Brezhnev policy of expansion in Africa (bases in Angola and the Horn of Africa), and the Soviet Union might have hesitated before embroiling itself in Afghanistan. Now, of course, all this makes little difference. The aims and errors of Soviet power have become irrelevant, since the Soviet Union no longer exists.

Walter Isaacson's biography of Kissinger recognizes its subject's merits as a negotiator and a connoisseur of the balance of power. However, it is not quite fair to him. His achievement is recounted, but not adequately analyzed. For instance, America's desperate position in the world at the time Kissinger took over is not sufficiently emphasized. Moreover, the narrative of events is submerged in a flood of anecdotes about Kissinger's personal habits. He is presented as a rather ludicrous figure, flying into rages ("Kissinger began throwing books about, a sure sign that he was angry"), enjoying the company of starlets and expensive meals, obsessed with secrecy, and devious, even when deviousness was unnecessary. A superficial glance at this biography would give the impression that, when not bullying his staff, Kissinger was tapping their phones, and when not being obsequious to the President, he was slanging him behind his back.

Isaacson is quite stern about all this. Yet has he never enjoyed an expensive meal or criticized his editor behind the latter's back? Most journalists do both. As to the secrecy and staged fits of anger, it should be remembered that Kissinger, a foreign-born American, had suddenly been precipitated into a leading position within a government machine, to whose bureaucratic ways he was a stranger. To be able to carry out his policies he needed control—control over his own staff and that of other departments, influence over a neurotic and changeable President. Without secrecy and "back channels," without overcoming the inveterate tendency of American institutions to produce pluralistic policies, Kissinger would never have been able to carry on his remarkable diplomatic activities.

Isaacson's most sustained criticism of Kissinger, however, concerns the problem of morality in foreign policy. How can Kissinger's ruthless diplomatic opportunism be reconciled with American idealism? Opposed to his "conspiratorial nature" is the vision of Woodrow Wilson sailing across the Atlantic to give Europe "open covenants, openly arrived at." Yes, one might retort, but what did that get him? Repudiation by the American people and another world war in twenty years' time. The final consequences of President Wilson's policy of "self-determination" are to be seen in the Balkans today.

In 1969 the difficulties of the United States were simply not soluble by the application of moral fervor or straight talk. Without the edged tools of the old diplomacy America might have seen its enemies progress and its alliances dissolve in those difficult years. No "scout's honor" style of diplomacy could have achieved what Kissinger did.

Ruthlessness is hardly unknown in American political life. If Kissinger was devious, what about Franklin Roosevelt? If he was prepared to override the rights of other countries, what about the Spanish–American war? There is a dark thread of *Realpolitik* that runs through the idealistic woof of American foreign policy. Every nation has interests. Almost any nation, when pushed into a corner, will fight like a cat to defend itself. The United States, a very powerful country, does not differ from others in this respect.

A more telling criticism is that Kissinger created a system of foreign policy which only he could work. After he left, the central control of policy broke down, as the long-smoldering row between Cyrus Vance at the State Department and Zbigniew Brzezinski at the National Security Council testifies. In other hands, Kissinger's policy of "binding" the Soviet Union into the international system proved insufficient to restrain Brezhnev from taking advantage of imagined American weakness.

But Kissinger had little choice in his strategy or tactics. Propping up the State Department as an institution hardly counted in comparison with what was at stake. Once in power, he had to take what opportunities he could by what means he had at his disposal. History did not deal him an easy hand; it is futile to suggest possible variations in the fall of the cards. Isaacson has written a fascinating book, but future historians will be more generous. Still, it is unlikely that Kissinger will ever be an attractive figure for those who want their foreign policy "open" or "moral." Those gifted enough to play an effective game on the international chessboard appear to others as ambiguous and untrustworthy figures. But it is hardly their function to do otherwise. □

The Character Issue

ANTHONY LEJEUNE

THE so-called "literary novel" is a curious kind of artifact. You might think that all novels were, by definition, "literary," but the term actually excludes most novels. To read one of these highly revered and much reviewed volumes for the story (which is surely what novels are primarily about) would entail the urgent need of a fast-forward button. For colorful characters then? But very few modern novelists seem even to have entered themselves in the Dickens Stakes. Should we read them, as the Church of England says we should read the Apocrypha, "for example of life and instruction of manners," or for a social and political message? Perhaps: but there must be more efficient and quicker methods of study. In fact, much "literary" writing appears to be phrase-making for its own sake.

***The Porcupine*, by Julian Barnes (Knopf, 138 pp., $17)**

Julian Barnes is unquestionably a skilled manipulator of words. His new book, *The Porcupine*, can indeed be described as a literary novel (or novella, since it is very short), but, although many sentences are conspicuously and imaginatively well-turned, there is little of the tricksiness and jokiness for which his writing has been admired. Of plot development—narrative—there is almost none: the only potential twist is allowed to escape virtually unexplored. Effectively, there

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are just two characters, protagonist and antagonist, mere animate arguments with little flesh on them, backed by an occasional burst of comment from a chorus of observers.

What we are offered is an exercise in political imagination. Mr. Barnes has taken for his subject the changes in Eastern Europe, the transformation from Communism to whatever you wish to call the passionate, confused, ambivalent regimes which now prevail. Bulgaria was his rough model—indeed, the book was first published in Bulgarian. Todor Zhivkov, the deposed head of state, sent for a copy to read in his prison cell.

It describes succinctly the show-trial (under the new democratic guise, which proves not so very different from the old totalitarian guise) of just such a fallen Communist leader. Mr. Barnes has made an intense effort to understand, from inside, the positions both of the prosecutor and of the defendant. The exposition is fair and emotionally sympathetic. If it reveals nothing unexpected or brilliantly illuminating, the reason may simply be that those positions are familiar, painfully familiar, to anyone who has lived through, and thought about, the history of our times.

The Communist, Petkanov, is allowed to have the best of it, perhaps because Mr. Barnes thinks the less fashionable cause the more interesting to expound. Petkanov still thinks it the nobler cause: "What do people want? They want stability and hope. We gave them that. Things might not have been perfect, but with Socialism people could dream that one day they might be. You have only given them instability and hopelessness. A crime wave. The black market. Pornography. Prostitution. . . . We gave them sausage *and* higher things. You do not believe in higher things, and you do not even give them sausage. There is none in the shops."

Petkanov plays with the court, as a master musician tunes and plays a long-practiced instrument. He lists the honors which the outside world once piled on him, recalls the praise he once received from Western leaders seeking to ingratiate themselves and do business with the Communist bloc. And he remains, in his own mind, chillingly confident of the future. "You don't get to Heaven on the first jump. . . . What was happening was that just for a

"A superb piece of scholarship. Admirable for its integrity and painstaking research. Kopel provides the fresh air of reason in a national debate too often marked by acrimony and prejudice."
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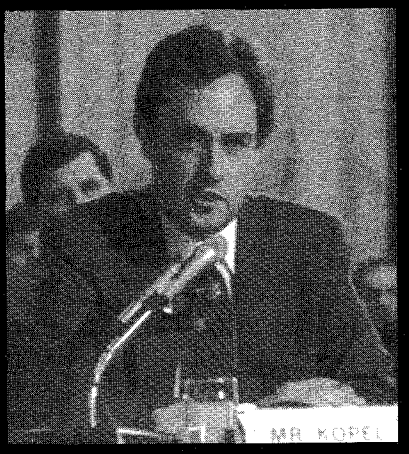
Should America Adopt the Gun Controls of Other Democracies?

by David B. Kopel



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brief historical moment the old system was being allowed a last little hop in its slimy frog-pond. But then, inevitably, the spirit of Socialism will shake itself again, and in *our* next jump we shall squelch the capitalists down into the mud until they expire beneath our boots."

The prosecutor, meanwhile, finds what had seemed to be his quarry's obvious guilt running through his fingers like sand. A "moral trial," without the need for specific provable charges, being judged impossible and anyway incompatible with new ideas about the rule of law, and a Ceausescu-type killing (which some of the young would prefer) also having been excluded, the best he can manage is an unconvincing, inadequate, predetermined verdict. After which, like the old man at the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, though with less confidence, he goes off to church, while an old woman in the street outside holds up a picture of Lenin.

That *The Porcupine* is extremely well written hardly needs saying; Mr. Barnes has earned his reputation. The constant sprinkling of obscenities may be considered obligatory in a literary novel. The political analysis rings true and is often shrewd. The narrative, however, lacks warmth or, in the end, any particular moral force. It is a purely intellectual construction.

This in turn provokes a question. Why does this theme—the collapse, ideological as well as practical, of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe—hold such fascination for Western intellectuals? One clear answer is that the Western intellectuals were themselves morally involved. They had their own investment in the regimes that have collapsed. At the very least, they felt themselves to be part of the argument: its vocabulary and ideology were not altogether alien to them, as that way of thinking was and is quite alien to many of us.

Mr. Barnes, being a literary more than a philosophic intellectual, hints, in one significant passage, at a different approach, a different worry. "We have moved," fears the prosecutor, "into an era when 'character' is a misleading concept." If this were true, one crucial element of bourgeois fiction, especially highbrow fiction, would have been obliterated. Just such destruction has been the common currency of Western academia lately.

But there is an even worse disaster implied. According to a British reviewer, the failure of the trial in *The Porcupine* represents "quiet despair about the value of liberal discourse." If that despair were justified, the intellectuals' occupation would really have gone. □

FILM

Not for Enlightened Buddhists

JOHN SIMON

Vincent Lacava

WHY THE perennial fascination of horror movies? If we are to believe Gore Vidal (in *Screening History*) it is that "any confirmation that life continues after death has an appeal to almost everyone except enlightened Buddhists. No one wants to be extinct." But extinction may be preferable to afterlife as a vampire in a Francis Ford Coppola movie. The latest, ***Bram Stoker's Dracula***, tries to be for Dracula what *Apocalypse Now* was for Vietnam, and the *Godfather* trilogy for the Mafia: gigantism as an end in itself, *lusher* as a synonym for *better*.

Perhaps I am being hopelessly old-fashioned but I don't trust people who can't tell the difference between *lie* and *lay* as far as I can throw up. In this movie, we keep hearing "lay down" and "lay back," and in the screenplay by James V. Hart (scenarist also of the hopeless *Hook*) we read: "Panels pull apart to reveal Dracula laying in his 'day coma.'" Would you, *mutatis mutandis*, commission a score from a tone-deaf composer?

If you lust for luxury, to be sure, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, i.e., Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*, may be your *Dracula*, too. But if you want a film that knows what it wants and goes about its business efficiently, don't touch this one with a ten-foot stake. Coppola has engaged the services of a talented jet-set crew. The Japanese designer Eiko Ishioka has dreamed up her most nightmarish costumes, the German cinematographer Michael Ballhaus has come up with his customary spellbinding images, and the Polish composer Wojciech Kilar (best known for his work for Wajda) has concocted music that is no joke. Countless craftsmen, technicians, and special-effects wizards—and no fewer than three editors—have contributed their skills. The eye and the ear are dazzled, but the nose must be held.

The movie may be faithful in its fashion-show fashion to Bram Stoker's fustian novel, but faithfulness is a virtue only if its object is deserving. The film does not know what it is doing. It tries to make Dracula as sympathetic as he is horrible, for which the genius of a Shakespeare would be required. It makes Mina, the lovable heroine, love Dracula more than she does Jonathan, her fiancé, which does not make our hearts go out to her. It tries to give us the historic background of Dracula, the Rumanian despot Vlad the Impaler, but in a kind of foreshortening that turns history into a comic strip. The protagonist is allowed so many different shapes that we perceive him more as a quick-change artist than as a vampire. And Coppola and Hart do not know how to invest the preposterous with the slightest aura of plausibility.

The film steals from all over. Its debt to Murnau's *Nosferatu* and Tay Garnett's *Dracula* is understandable, but must there also be cribbing from Cocteau's *La Belle et la bête* and Fellini's *Casanova*? I refer to the human arms as flambeaus, and to the twin-

Mr. Simon, NR's film critic, is also theater critic for New York *magazine.*

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peaks sausage-roll hairdo for Dracula, which makes his head look impaled on the horns of a dilemma. But the worst theft may be replicating a dated novel about Victorian dread of sexuality instead of imaginatively rethinking it along modern lines—or, better yet, dropping it altogether.

Gary Oldman, a fine actor, strives to play a thinking man's Dracula, but between that effort and the straining to sound Transylvanian, he ends up giving a performance so carefully calibrated as to lose all semblance of trash-movie spontaneity. As Doctor Van Helsing, Anthony Hopkins has an even harder time with his Dutch accent, and ends up merely peppering his lines with random *jas*. But what to do with a part that calls on him to answer Mina's anguished "You want to dissect her?" with a casual "Not really; I just want to cut off her head and take out her heart"? Winona Ryder, as Mina, manages a better British accent than one might have expected, and is very pretty except for her slightly batlike ears, which may explain her susceptibility to vampires. As Jonathan, Keanu Reeves looks befuddled, and delivers his lines in an electronically amplified whisper. Tom Waits, as Renfield, swallows various insects with real gusto, which may account for his patented growl as mere flies on the voice box.

A young English actress, Sadie Frost, plays the campy role of Lucy rather too cloyingly, but with a persuasively bared left breast. Three international models play the brides of Dracula even more bared—from fangs to (nearly) crotch—and would do any burlesque house proud. Coppola indulges himself in any number of such fancy touches. Thus he makes Dracula wear contact lenses of various colors to match the degree of luridness of the situation; allows "Dracula" to be pronounced in three separate ways; and cuts whimsically from a stake being driven into someone to someone eating steak, which makes the more sophisticated punsters in the audience squeal like a bunch of moon-mad paronomasiacs.

■ Children looking for more wholesome fare can be safely directed to ***Aladdin***, Disney's new feature-length cartoon. Something, however, seems to have gone out of animation, or else out of me, for it no longer thrills me. But

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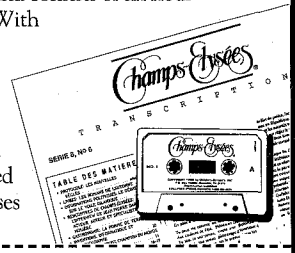

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I was surrounded by hordes of tots—not to mention doting parents—who appeared to be having a blue whale of a time. I mean, of course, the blue-whale-like Genie that dwarfs the rest of the cast as Robin Williams's verbal excesses are devoutly given objective correlatives by the animation. Not actually having to see Williams is, of course, an asset, but, ideally, it should be possible to do away with hearing him, too.

Williams's bloated blue-bottle Genie balloons all over the film, and whoever relishes our own Robin Goodfellow should float as high as his effigy. Unfortunately, the lovable boy-thief Aladdin (spoken by Scott Weinger, sung by Brad Kane) and the spunky Princess Jasmine (voice: Linda Larkin; vocals: Lea Salonga) are of little interest, distinguished mostly by being the first cartoon hero and heroine sporting faintly Semitic noses. The songs, whether by the old team of Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman, or by the new combo of Menken and Tim Rice, are equally unremarkable.

As usual, there are all kinds of kissable or hissable supporting characters: the monkey (later turned elephant) Abu, the parrot Iago (sidekick to the villainous vizier Jaffar), the kindly Sultan (drolly voiced by Douglas Seale), and Jasmine's pet tiger, the pussycatty Rajah. Perhaps the best invention is the anthropoid Magic Carpet, which uses its tassels with a "gestic" eloquence that would have delighted Bertolt Brecht.

■ Arguably the strangest film I've ever seen is ***Tous les Matins du monde***, which won seven Césars (French Oscars) in 1991, as well as other prizes, and turned all France baroque-happy. It is the fictionalized story of two real-life baroque musicians: Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, so reclusive that his first name remains unknown, and Marin Marais (1656–1728), whose viola da gamba gambols are much better known. The film is based on a novel by Pascal Quignard, who co-wrote the script with Alain Corneau, the director.

Although *Matins* has a plot of sorts, it is mostly about playing the bass viol. The film flaunts almost continuous bass-viol playing, on the soundtrack by one, two, or three instruments; on the screen by Sainte Colombe, his daughters Madeleine and Toinette, and Marin Marais in various combinations. If in a moment of charity the bass viols stop their infernal scraping, the characters discuss bass-viol playing and musicianship in general ad nauseam.

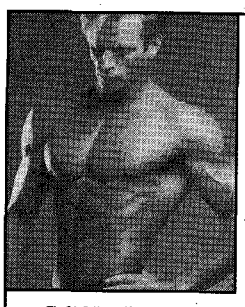
Let not Bill Buckley read this review, for I am about to confess that I know of no sounds less bearable than those of baroque music, unless it be baroque music played on one, two, or three bass viols, than which I can think of nothing more base and vile. Since the two-hour film seems to go on for centuries, I kept hoping we would get to Berlioz, where French music gets bearable, but no such luck. Jordi Savall and his consort of musicians just kept fiddling away on the soundtrack; not since the unendurably 'umble Uriah Heep has there been such bowing and scraping.

The story, or what passes for it, concerns Sainte Colombe's rude refusal to play for the king at court, and eventual ceasing to play even for his fellow villagers. He now makes music only at home with his daughters. In the end, he has a cottage built on the grounds where he plays for no one but the ghost of his beloved dead wife, who sits there, untouchable but undeterred, raptly listening to him. Brash young Marais intrudes on the master's isolation and demands lessons; the contemptuous master listens to him and sneers, "You make music; you are not a musician." But with support from the sex-starved daughters, Marin gets reluctantly taken on as a pupil by Papa, and taken into her bed by Madeleine, the elder sister.

In due time, however, nothing can keep the virtuosic Marais from abandoning Madeleine and artistic purity ("Life, to be sweet, must be cruel!") and hotfingering it to Versailles to become Musician Ordinary to the King's Chamber and, later on, time beater (there were no conductors yet) to the Paris Opéra. Still, for three years running, he keeps riding back clandestinely every night to glue his ear to the master's cabin in the hope of overhearing his secret. (Earlier, he and Madeleine used to hide in a ditch under the cabin, listening, but were discovered by Papa and chased away.) When he comes upon Sainte Colombe dying, Marais is let in for a final debate about music and a last session of battling bass viols.

But no summary can do justice to the absurdity of the film, with its alternating dawdlings and lurchings forward, static camera setups, hopelessly arty visual compositions, and sublimely artsy-fartsy dialogue. Yet it exercises a horrible fascination, like watching midgets playing basketball or listening to stutterers discussing Wittgenstein. Any moment, you feel, you might lapse into helpless giggles or a rampaging rage. But you end up just sitting there, as if suspended by your disbelief, anaesthetized by your incredulity at such toweringly arrogant kitsch. If hokum has a stratosphere, you are in it.

Jean-Pierre Marielle is a marvelously sourpussy Sainte Colombe of whom you can easily believe that he would punitively lock his daughters into the cellar and forget them there—the baroque precursor of *Home Alone*. No less superb is Anne Brochet as Madeleine, the *jolie laide*, love-starved virgin who falls hard for young Marin, and, ditched, dies lingeringly of accumulated bitterness. Mlle Brochet in a nightgown ugly enough to become her shroud, and tossing about and out of her sickbed as she lets the camera scan her ravaged-looking legs and pudenda, offers a vision of spurned femi-



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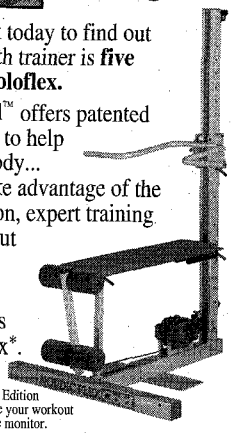

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ninity powerful enough to make watching her an almost guilty pleasure.

As young Marin, Guillaume Depardieu seems quite untalented, but wonderfully doltish and loutish. Papa Gérard, as the aging—bloated, beribboned, bedizened—Marais, looking in a peruke like a mastiff masquerading as a poodle, is at least more credible here than as Columbus elsewhere. Yves Angelo's cinematography and Alain Corneau's direction are appropriately stilted and emphatic, but the English subtitles try to jazz up things by translating the decorous *sexe* (penis) as *prick*. It doesn't work; baroque will not be jazzed up. □

THEATER

Crank It Up

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

WITH THEIR calls for ever more public money and their equally insistent denials that any disease matters as much as their own, AIDS activists have done their best to deter sympathy. So much so that to find one of them worthy of affection and admiration comes as a shock.

Larry Kramer helped found the quasi-terrorist ACT-UP—which makes sense, terrorism being an appropriate response to "genocide," which is what he says the (pre-Clinton) Federal Government has waged against homosexuals. He is also a playwright, novelist, and screenwriter who, for all his experience creating dramas, has refused to admit there is such a thing in human life as tragedy. AIDS is no tragedy, according to Kramer. It is, instead, an entirely preventable phenomenon, the outcome of bureaucratic ineptitude and hostility on the part of heterosexual health officials—"genocide." Says Ned Weeks, the obnoxious autobiographical hero of Kramer's two AIDS plays: "What do you do when you're dying from a disease you need not be dying from?"

And yet it's hard to watch Kramer's newest AIDS play, ***The Destiny of Me***, at the Lucille Lortel Theatre on (where else?) Christopher Street, and come away without warm feelings for the guy. A writer for the *Village Voice* recently visited Kramer at his apartment in Greenwich Village and pronounced him "adorable," in a fuzzy beard and oversized sweater. I wouldn't go that far.

Both *The Destiny of Me* and *The Normal Heart*, his previous AIDS play, along with *Faggots*, his novel, take Kramer's own life as their primary text. In *Heart* (1985), Ned Weeks is a writer who, confronted with the early blossoming of AIDS among several friends and lovers, turns activist and inaugurates an unnamed AIDS-fighting group. By the time of *Destiny*, Ned has himself become a host to the HIV virus—as, in real life, has Kramer. The play opens to find Ned unpacking his bags for a stay at the National Institutes of Health, where he greets the chief doctor with the demand, "How long can you keep me alive?" In three acts, scenes from Ned's childhood and youth are played out, items of furniture from his old bedroom, family room, and college dorm sliding elegantly out through openings in the white-tiled hospital walls.

The seeds of family drama have been lifted from *Faggots* (1978). There as here, the mother of the Larry Kramer stand-in character is an overbearing woman, physically large and emotionally smothering; the father, an embittered man who feels his Yale education entitled him to a better life than the one, as a minor government functionary, he actually leads. In *Destiny* the couple are acted, by Piper Laurie and David Spielberg, convincingly enough to make you cringe.

As a younger Ned, John Cameron Mitchell looks a little like Juliette Lewis (Woody Allen's love interest in *Husbands and Wives*). Though Mitchell is effective as a foil to Ned's parents—cowering in the presence of Ned's dad, looking rightfully disturbed as he complains to his mom about the way her nightgown exposes too much of her bosom—it's Jonathan Hadary, as the adult and hospitalized Ned, who really represents Larry Kramer and captures all his charms.

Ned, like Kramer, is a ranter. But he differs from the usual run of ranting AIDS activists in the focused and entirely straightforward quality of his anger. When ACT-UP (from which Kramer has since dissociated himself) acts up, part of the aim is to secure money and attention. Another part is to secure society-wide approval of the gay lifestyle and all it entails. That's why the Catholic Church, with no hand at all in medical research, has inspired such fury. Among AIDS activists, perhaps more urgently desired than a cure for AIDS is a cure for their own guilt.

The anger of Larry Kramer, on the other hand, is no masquerade. Ned rails at his doctor, Tony Della Vida (Bruce McCarty); calls the National Institutes of Health the "National Institute of Quacks"; and has nothing but contempt for the hundreds of researchers currently attempting to figure out what makes AIDS tick. There is something, not adorable, but lovable in this. His is the lovability of a champion crank: single-minded, irrational, 100 per cent sincere. Even as Dr. Della Vida works tirelessly to protect Ned's health, Ned posts a sign on his wall: "Tony, You Are Murdering Us." Jonathan Hadary plays the role with a combination of cheerfulness and disgust in his voice that makes you feel as if you've spent an evening with Larry Kramer himself.

As Kramer has made clear in his previous work, he has no great interest in forcing the nation to endorse the habits of homosexuals. *Faggots* satirized the world of bathhouses and Fire Island beach cottages, a world where grown-up males go by irritating diminutives such as Derry, Dinky, and Mikie. Kramer found the scene at once hilarious and contemptible. He also found it deeply depressing that, as Ned Weeks puts it in *The Normal Heart*, "All we've created is generations of guys who can't deal with each other as anything but erections." Or, as Ned asks in *The Destiny of Me*, "Doesn't having so much sex make love impossible?"

For years Kramer has been asking whether gay men should be having sex with each other at all. That they should not is the inevitable message of both *The Normal Heart* and *The Destiny of Me*, making Kramer an object

Mr. Klinghoffer is NR*'s associate literary editor.*

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of ambivalence among gays. At a tenth-anniversary smash for Gay Men's Health Crisis (another Kramer creation) at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, he got up to speak and ended up denouncing practically everyone present. And yet he has failed so far to win the attention he deserves from his (unlikely, and to him probably distasteful) allies on the Right. Here is an open homosexual and enemy of euphemisms who prefers the term "faggot" to "gay" because of its "punch, bite, a no-nonsense, chin-out assertiveness." A man of genuine seriousness, he wants to know (in *Heart*), when it comes to fighting any threat to human life, whether there aren't "moral obligations, moral commandments to try everything possible." The other day we received here at *NR* a copy of the new, updated edition of *The Joy of Gay Sex* (HarperCollins). The volume includes sections on sadomasochism, sex with animals, and sex with children. Against such a moral landscape Larry Kramer absolutely towers.

There is no denying that, as an artist, Kramer can be crude. His characters tend to launch into paragraphs of prose better suited to the letters section of the *New York Times*. The power of his conviction, though, makes up for this lack of artfulness. *The Destiny of Me* is propaganda, but propaganda of a type that leaves you feeling as if you've been punched in the gut. You don't have to believe what Larry Kramer says about the National Institutes of Health. He deserves our respect, though, and certainly our prayers. □

ART

American Graffiti

JAMES GARDNER

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT spent most of his career as a has-been—a remarkable achievement if you consider that he was only 27 when he OD'd on heroin. In the decade prior to that, however, he had moved from the periphery of the art world to its very center before slipping, by swift degrees, into marginalized irrelevance. For most of the Eighties the only opinion you really needed if you wanted to sound informed about contemporary painting (and who didn't?) was that Basquiat's latest productions lacked the spontaneity and freshness of his earlier works. His paintings continued to sell and he was still being written about, but the listless gaze of the art world was now looking for fresher meat.

His overdose four years ago changed all that. Death had turned him into a finite commodity. Death might not alter the quality of his work, but it certainly affected their quantity. Suddenly the works of this all-too-prolific artist started to feel rare indeed. SoHo awoke to what had been lost. No more would the wild child of the art world be shooting up in Annina Nosei's basement. No more would he be spilling coffee on critics or vomiting into the latrines of the Mudd Club. There was the vague certitude that *they*, whoever *they* were, had done this to him, that he had been done in by a cold, uncaring world that hated youth and genius and all that. His death cried out for noisy, fulsome piaculation, and the stream of eulogies has been flowing ever since.

© Estate of Jean-Michel Basquiat / Whitney Museum

The present retrospective at New York's Whitney Museum is the final stage in the apotheosis of Jean-Michel Basquiat. With this exhibition he passes into the art-historical pantheon, from which eminence he need no longer abide the questions of a doubting public. The Whitney's large and pompous proceedings put the subject to bed with full honors in a catalogue tumid with footnotes and bibliographies and scholarly apparatus. Some idea of the objectivity of the essays will be suggested by René Ricard's observation, on page 49, that "[Basquiat] remains wrapped in the silent purple toga of Immortality."

Basquiat surfed to prominence on the neo-Expressionist wave that marked the Eighties' reaction against the cool, rarefied conceptualism of the Seventies. His was an art of anger and rebellion, we were told, of graffiti images and street slang. Everything about this art was designed to keep you guessing, to keep you hoping, and sometimes believing, that you were seeing more than you really were seeing. Basquiat was anomaly made flesh: a graffiti artist fully aware of the European avant garde, a defacer of public property who had attended a private school, a formalist who raised the banner of social protest, a gritty black presence in the conspicuously white world of SoHo.

It was this enigmatic lack of focus that lent him, while he lived, the semblance of something more than ever met the eye. In an early work like *Aaron 1*, depicting a brutally crude male head surrounded by childish renderings of cars, one finds the crazed and jagged Crayola scribblings of Cy Twombly allied to Francis Bacon's perspectives and the colorism of Jasper Johns. A later work like *Philistines*, whose title of course is ironic, depicts three spikily abstracted skeletons whose manic gaze confronts the viewer with the ghosts of Jean Dubuffet and the late Picasso. The quite pleasant *L.A. Painting* (1982), with its cinemascopic expanse of swimming pool blue and tawny yellow, recalls any number of Color Field abstractionists from the Fifties and early Sixties. To enhance this formal weightiness, in almost all of Basquiat's paintings, the viewer is given a lot to read, disconnected words and phrases like "Gangsterism," "Colonization: Part Two in a Series," "Asecticism" [*sic*], and "Sugar Coated Corn Puffs." If you find yourself asking what all of this is supposed to mean, you are probably temperamentally unsuited to the enjoyment of his art.

Mr. Gardner writes about art for NR *and other publications.*

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I have been returning periodically to Basquiat for close to ten years, each time hoping to see some point in him that others saw but that had eluded me. I hereby renounce the effort. Surely there are things in the Whitney retrospective which may in part be approved. In principle, there is nothing wrong with the formal premises of these paintings. Even if they cannot survive comparison with the works from which they filch their pictorial underpinnings, at least they can be judged by the same criteria of composition, color, and drawing. Given the present affection for floating basketballs and burping cathode ray tubes, this seems positively reactionary. But in truth Basquiat's paintings are a tangle of competing forms of mediocrity. In some paintings the colors work well, in others they collapse into complete arbitrariness. The same could be said for the draftsmanship and composition. In no one work do all the elements effortlessly come together. This is why Basquiat never rises to equality with any of the sources of his inspiration.

The appeal of Basquiat's paintings lies elsewhere. Like so much that becomes fashionable, this art began to appeal through its newness, through the crisp acidity of its acrylic, through the manifest fact of its bigness. Soon it was being exhibited in the right museums and the right galleries and the right living rooms in New York and L.A. and Cologne, until it started to seem a classic of its kind, inscrutable, definitive unto itself. And that is how things stand now. Given all the hype and all the fluid capital that have been poured into these paintings, we can confidently predict that they will not be sinking soon into that oblivion to which they are ultimately condemned. □

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Nofziger, by Lyn Nofziger (Regnery Gateway, 358 pp., $21.95)

WRONG TITLE. This intensely personal memoir should have been called *Pure Nofziger*. These are the chatty, no-bark ramblings of the legendary Franklyn C. Nofziger as he travels, with Ronald Reagan and the conservative movement, from the outhouse to the White House. Nofziger spins yarns, settles score after score, and, best of all, opens old wounds. The feuds with Nancy (true, but overstated), the homosexual ring in the governor's office (yep, but Kemp wasn't part of it), the Kitchen Cabinet (yep, but Justin Dart wasn't part of it), Mike Deaver (the rarity, even in politics, who turned on *both* of his mentors, Meese and Clark), George Bush (in Reagan's eyes, he finally outgrew wimpdom), James A. Baker III—well, we ought to save something, but just to get you started: Nofziger defines fratricide as Baker bagging a turkey. Verily, all the *Washington Post* Style section's open questions are herein resolved. In other words, a great read, and recommended as a companion volume to Ed Meese's all-but-official account of the Reagan years. These two books will stand as the case for the defense, at least until the Morgan biography appears, and possibly beyond.

—NEAL B. FREEMAN

The Rebirth of the West: The Americanization of the Democratic World, by Peter Duignan and Lewis Gann (Blackwell, 733 pp., $40)

IN 1945 Western intellectuals would have regarded as lunacy the notion that Europe would soon be wealthier by far than it had ever been before. They were aghast when the Old World Americanized itself and began to rival America in its prosperity. The tale of Europe's rise from the ashes has been told many times, but never as comprehensively as by Duignan and Gann. The authors show that the rebirth of the West was due little if at all to government programs, but rather to the infusion of American attitudes into a European population which war had cleansed of illusion, liberated from dysfunctional elites, and wedded to common sense. The book traces the immediate effects of World War II on politics, economics, society, and culture. It deals in facts and illustrative anecdotes, showing the psychological changes wrought by American notions of equality and meritocracy, by American optimism, and by such material examples of Americanization as flush toilets. Similarly it shows how the growth of bureaucracy threatens to choke Europe's rebirth. Written in the crisp, declarative English of Macaulay, this book is essential for understanding the mess that Europe has lately become.

—ANGELO M. CODEVILLA

Jungle in Black, by Steve Maguire (Bantam, 288 pp., $4.95)

THERE HAVE BEEN so many books written about the Vietnam War that one fears another can only lead to oversaturation. What sets *Jungle in Black* apart, however, is its tone and theme, which are

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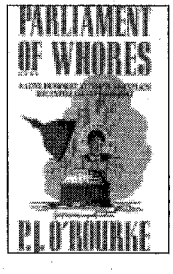

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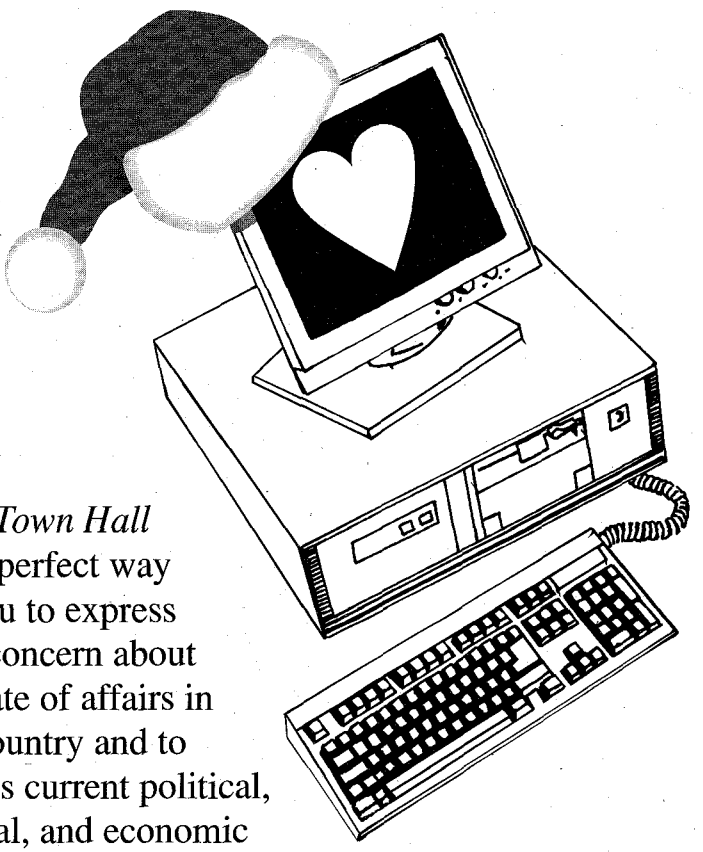

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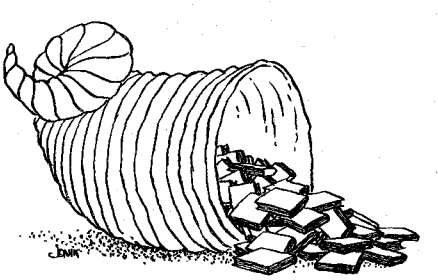
not anti-American. Steve Maguire paints the war in Southeast Asia in all its true horror and brutality, but does so with respect—the weird sort of respect all wars and their veterans deserve. The author, who commanded the 9th Infantry Division battalion in the Mekong Delta, was blinded for life by a Vietcong landmine. *Jungle in Black* tells the story of how he put his life back together in a country that has shunned any respectful memory of the war and those who fought it. And to his surprise, he finds himself a better and happier man *because of* his handicap. The book of course is also about courage and honor, duty and sacrifice. It is a true story with all the drama, character sketches, and human emotion of fiction.

—Geoffrey Morris

Hemingway: A Life without Consequences, by James R. Mellow (Houghton Mifflin, 704 pp., $30)

EVERYBODY WHO knew him should write his own biography of Hemingway—and many have. This one is mistitled: "*A Life without Consequences*." Mellow calls Hemingway a creative genius and implies that he was our greatest novelist; but every one of his books explored a



different phase of his *life*. The biography I would write, if I were so foolish, would not be the one Mellow writes. The Hemingway he depicts is opportunistic, mean-spirited, publicity-mad, bitchy, envious, and cruel. Mostly that is what you find in the letters, as more and more become accessible. The Hemingway I knew was humble, generous, brave, self-mocking, kind. That one is there too, but harder to find, the novelist not being given to self-scrutiny or self-pity. What I have written about that second Hemingway has been published, but it is not what the biographers are looking for. Will the whole Hemingway ever be captured between two covers?

—Selden Rodman

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TRANS-O-GRAM / Kem Putney

1 I	2 P	3 F	4 C	■	5 E	6 K	7 J	8 N	9 D	10 B	■	11 Q	12 A	13 O	14 L	15 G	16 N	17 I	■	18 P
19 R	20 U	21 M	■	22 H	23 F	24 L	25 E	26 C	27 T	■	28 A	29 D	30 K	■	31 O	32 J	33 I	34 P	35 S	■
36 N	37 G	38 M	39 C	40 A	41 K	42 V	43 T	■	44 N	45 E	46 P	47 L	■	48 D	49 G	50 H	51 M	52 O	53 A	■
54 L	55 P	56 U	57 R	58 H	59 B	60 O	61 J	62 D	63 G	64 E	65 I	■	66 C	67 K	68 O	■	69 M	70 Q	71 T	72 H
73 S	74 P	■	75 D	76 L	77 E	78 N	■	79 S	80 K	81 J	82 U	83 I	■	84 A	85 N	86 V	87 C	88 H	■	89 S
90 G	■	91 F	92 I	93 B	94 J	95 L	96 U	97 E	98 C	99 Q	100D	101P	■	102K	103N	104I	■	105B	106G	107O
■	108R	109K	110S	111J	112I	113F	114V	115A	116N	117L	■	118H	119V	■	120B	121D	122T	123P	124S	■
125G	126U	127F	128S	129A	130R	131J	132D	■	133Q	134O	■	135M	136F	137H	138C	■	139Q	140C	141F	142D
143M	144T	145P	146I	147B	■	148O	149L	■	150U	151K	152R	■	153E	154G	155H	156D	157R	158T	159F	160B
161J	■	162P	163H	164F	165N	■	166A	167T	168C	169F	170I	171N	172M	173E	174K	175G	176L	■	■	■

DEFINITIONS

A. Parking spot — 53 40 166 115 12 84 28 129

B. Odysseus, to the Romans — 93 160 147 120 10 59 105

C. Power — 66 140 168 138 39 87 98 26 4

D. Jacob's purchase — 48 62 29 121 142 9 156 132 75 100

E. Developing — 64 77 153 97 5 45 25 173

F. Make young again — 127 169 91 136 23 164 3 159 141 113

G. Capable — 106 154 90 37 125 175 49 63 15

H. Tiresome smiling circle (2 words) — 163 118 58 72 88 155 50 137 22

I. Educational method — 1 104 83 146 17 112 65 92 170 33

J. Miseries — 61 81 94 111 32 131 7 161

K. Literary-sounding city in California — 109 174 102 41 151 6 80 67 30

L. New Testament book — 176 54 47 24 149 14 76 95 117

M. Beatles' nickname — 135 172 38 21 143 69 51

N. Omnipresent — 85 16 116 171 165 44 103 8 36 78

O. Disasters — 68 107 31 148 60 13 52 134

P. A kind of commerce — 145 34 162 74 123 101 46 2 18 55

Q. Degrade — 133 11 139 99 70

R. Oxymoronic congressional committee — 152 108 19 130 157 57

S. Species endangered by the spotted owl — 73 89 79 35 110 128 124

T. Progress — 158 167 144 71 122 43 27

U. One of the Gilbert Islands — 150 126 56 96 82 20

V. Star of *Born Free* — 42 114 119 86

DIRECTIONS

The object of TRANS-O-GRAM is to fill in the puzzle diagram by guessing the words from their definitions, and transferring each letter of the guessed word to the correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When the diagram is filled in it will spell out a quotation from some published work (reading normally from left to right, black boxes indicating the ends of words); also, when the words have all been filled in above, their initial letters will spell out the author and title of the quoted work. The acrostic feature, and the relative word-lengths in the diagram, will assist in the solution. Spelling and definitions on the authority of *Webster's New International Dictionary*, Second Edition.

Solution to Last Issue's Trans-O-Gram. SUSAN TRAUSCH—*The Debate*: "And then for something completely different, there was [Admiral] Stockdale. He was short on specifics as the Ross Perot plan tends to be, but long on guts and warmth. 'I feel like I'm at a pingpong match,' he said . . ."

For a 34-puzzle collection of Trans-O-Gram, send $5.95 (plus $1 S&H) to: T-Gram Plus, 3279 Lake Powell, Williamsburg, Virginia 23185.

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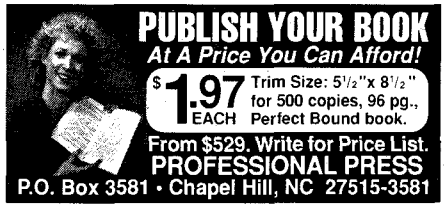
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Poor Man's War?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 28

Scene: U.S. Embassy, Saigon, January 1967. Present: Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and visiting journalist.

HCL: Do you know Mary McCarthy?

VJ: Well, sort of.

HCL: She was here with me for *three hours* this morning. Have you ever read *The Group*?

VJ: No, actually.

HCL: Well, in anticipation of her visit, I bought a copy. Now I know a . . . lot about sex. But I mean, after I read it, I had to *hide* it to keep anybody else from seeing it . . . But anyway, she comes in here and tells me that, of course, only poor boys get to Vietnam, and get killed here. I said to her, "How come so many sons and relatives of my own friends come here?" I can't count the letters I've written to parents and widows. . . .

It is a deeply rooted part of the conventional wisdom that during the Vietnam years, all you needed to do in order to escape service in the military was to be well-born and/or affluent. Indeed this was my own impression of reality, notwithstanding Ambassador Lodge's rebuke, and in an appearance in 1990 on the *MacNeil–Lehrer* program I admitted as much. Two scholars heard me on that program and have now written that in part because of my subscription to the legend, they were prompted to make a scholarly investigation. This they have done, and the extensive article reporting their findings appears in the current issue of the journal *Operations Research*. Arnold Barnett, professor of Operations Research at MIT, and Captain Timothy Stanley, of the Department of Social Sciences at West Point, write to tell me that "The main finding [of their research] was that variations by income in Vietnam death rates were marginal rather than gigantic, and thus that they cannot possibly sustain the rhetoric about 'class war' indulged in by James Fallows and many others."

The authors checked the family incomes of the 58,000 American war dead in Vietnam. They devised a "disparity score" under which "0" would mean that there was no net link between economic status and casualty rates, and "1" would mean that there was a heavy concentration of war deaths among the poor. Their finding: The disparity score for Vietnam was about 0.06. This suggests that only six one-hundredths of the affluent young had a safer life span in Vietnam than their poor counterparts.

The importance of these findings is self-evident. "If untrue, the belief that affluent citizens were conspicuously missing from the Vietnam war dead is harmful to all Americans. It demeans the sacrifices of the wealthy by implying that such sacrifices were non-existent. It demeans the sacrifices of the non-wealthy by suggesting that, manipulated and misled, they shed their blood in a conflict in which the privileged and influential were unwilling to shed theirs."

And this has of course been a postulate of the critics of the Vietnam War for a generation. A full-time merchandiser of it has been James Fallows. Mr. Fallows has written that with gold stars going to families in rural and working-class areas, "the mothers of Beverly Hills and Chevy Chase and Great Neck and Belmont were not on the telephones to their congressmen screaming, 'You killed my boy.'"

The scholars report: "We found that per-capita death rates exceeded the national average in three of the four 'upscale' communities, as did the overall rate for the four."

The legend holds that the growing antipathy to the war on the part of America's wealthy class was a reflection of the war's progressive inconvenience in the careers of their sons. The scholars comment, "A concentration of casualties among wealthy citizens toward the start of the war, therefore, might imply that such citizens rapidly withdrew from participating in the conflict once they ceased supporting it. Date-of-casualty data indicate, however, that deaths of servicemen from the richest 10 per cent of the nation's communities had essentially the same distribution over time as the deaths of other servicemen."

It would trivialize the findings of the two researchers to pretend that such devices as Bill Clinton engaged in—in effect, the manipulation of academic immunities—were rare. It is unquestionably true that thousands of students, perhaps tens of thousands, stayed on in college for the primary purpose of avoiding the draft. And among those who fled to Canada there was probably a higher incidence of the relatively wealthy. But these facts dramatize the findings of Messrs. Barnett and Stanley. They mean that notwithstanding the special protections available to the wealthy, on the whole they shed as much blood as the non-wealthy. Which means that Vietnam was indeed an all-American effort, and one that, some of us contend, will one day take its place in the annals of national nobility: a witness to America's disposition to endure special sacrifices in discharge of its heavy international responsibility: to contain the movement that brought death, oppression, and poverty to so many millions for so many years. □

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A Solution For The Post Office?

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6

In the great speech assembled by Ronald Reagan over a number of years and delivered on coast-to-coast TV on behalf of Barry Goldwater's campaign, one of the most telling lines compared the efficiency of the telephone company, privately owned, and the post office, publicly owned. By the time Mr. Reagan was through giving The Speech he would say (one forgets the exact formulation) that a long distance call from New York to San Francisco went down in price from $50 to $1 during the period when the delivery of a letter from the one city to the other went up in price from 5 to 18 cents. First-class mail is now 29 cents, but two years from now, unless something pretty drastic is done, the price will rise to 35

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cents. Meanwhile we hear such rumors as that maybe on Tuesdays and Thursdays we could get along without mail delivery. . . .

Much of the heat against the post office's performance was dissipated by two private-sector achievements. The first was Federal Express, a brilliant concept, brilliantly executed. It has its copiers, including the post office's Express Mail. But one tends to use Federal Express because of its uncanny efficiency. The other lifesaver of course has been the fax machine. There are about five million of these in active operation now and they seem to be growing exponentially.

Postmaster General Marvin Runyon swore last September that within ninety days he would crack open the post office, and his credentials are very good, he having run the TVA, another federal hemorrhage, where he cut down the bleeding by over $500 million annually. Mr. Runyon faces everything from inefficiency (the rise in postal rates greatly exceeds the rise in inflation) to scandal (to quote the *Washington Post*'s Bill McAllister: "On December 16, 1991, a St. Louis real-estate investment group purchased a largely vacant office building in downtown St. Louis for $5 million. Five hours later, the U.S. Postal Service bought the building for $12.5 million"). One wishes Mr. Runyon all the best, but necessarily we reflect on the consumption rate of Postmaster Generals: we have had six in the last seven years, and my proposal now is that President-elect Bill Clinton announce that he will offer the post to H. Ross Perot.

Why should he take it? Well, one reason is that he would take on a job big enough to challenge those skills he boasted of during $60 million worth of radio and television time. The post office spends about $40 billion per year, has over eight hundred thousand employees, and operates about thirty thousand branches. In the course of a year, the post office handles, and mishandles, about 166 billion pieces of mail.

Mr. Perot was asked, the day after the election, whether it was his intention to found a third party, and he said, No, but if four years from now he thought the time had come again to challenge the two-party duopoly, he might just go ahead. His vote—19 per cent—was truly astonishing. Only Theodore Roosevelt as a third-party candidate did better.

But although many questions were posed during the presidential debates, Ross Perot hit one theme tenaciously: We are a can-do country which is losing its managerial skills. Mr. Perot knows how to manage; he has proved himself out in the world of business. It may be a little bit of a comedown from managing all three million of the people who work for the Federal Government, but he'd have, as Postmaster General, the largest bloc of subordinates. And as for Mr. Clinton, by offering the position to Mr. Perot, the new President would be manifesting his non-partisan spirit and acknowledging the Perot voters' enthusiasm by giving their man a big job.

And of course if an impasse developed, of the kind that developed at General Motors when Perot served on its board of directors, President Clinton could simply sell the post office to Ross Perot, relieving us permanently of our misery. □

The Forgotten Man

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 9

The quarrel between those who believe that deregulation has been a net public good and those who believe it was a dreadful mistake finds this airplane traveler in an unusual situation. In theory I like what has happened; as a traveler, I am confounded by the unfolding mysteries of it all. A few weeks ago a friend met my wife and me at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands. To reach there, he needed to fly New York–Madrid–Las Palmas. From there we sailed aboard the Club Med liner to Martinique, and then flew back to New York. He needed the following day to make a business trip to Cleveland. It cost him more to fly New York–Cleveland–New York than it did to fly New York–Madrid–Las Palmas/Martinique–New York. It is hard to believe that Adam Smith could have run that one through the free-market wringer. Odd economic interventions are at play here, and they are giving the free market a bad name.

But regular air travelers come upon other anomalies. Unemployment in Martinique is officially registered at 30 per cent. In Italy, at about 11 to 15 per cent. In Spain, at about the same figure. But at airports in the three countries you will not find a porter. Is this because tourists refuse to pay a living wage to porters? I would doubt this, having seen any number of tourists, many of them men and women of autumnal age, struggling with their bags. I should confess, up front, that I have a special problem. I travel with as much hand luggage as Santa Claus, so that the pain is immediate as I leave the airplane and begin the—one-hundred-yard? three-hundred-yard?—walk to the baggage-claim area.

Traveling in the other direction, from the airline counter to the aircraft, if you are lucky you will find or be able to rent a trolley. With your briefcase, your computer, your correspondence sack, and your wife's carry-on, you arrive at the security gate: and you are told that you cannot retrieve your trolley on the other side.

More and more, in our bureaucratized world, we are habituated not to ask questions when dispensations of this kind are transmitted. But on this particular day in Rome, a little gestating flame, burning within me, flared up. And I approached the supervisor, looked him in the eyes, and said: "Why?" Why do airports require you to abandon life-saving conveniences at security check points? Do they suspect that you have injected cocaine into the aluminum rods? Or is it as simple as that the airport personnel will suffer the indignity of collecting the trolleys at the departure gates and returning them to the central collection points?

I suspect it is the latter, because the evidence mounts that the convenience of the passengers is of evanescing importance to the bureaucracies. That is probably why I mustered the courage in Rome to ask, Why? Because in order to reach the security gate it had taken us (I have a stopwatch) 32 minutes. There were two gates. One of them was shut down, no reason given. The live security gate processed passengers and their luggage at the rate of about one per minute and a half. If the alarm went off on the X-ray machine, the suspect was there and then required to expose his luggage —which meant that the two hundred persons standing in line stopped moving. The young inspector took his time, and his earnest exhaustion required him to take a little R & R every five minutes or so, at which point he would sit down and smoke a cigarette while his subjects sweated in line, some of us wondering whether we would reach the airplane before the airplane reached its cruising altitude.

It is an odd world. Massive unemployment and no porters at airports or (legal) dishwashers at restaurants, while travelers have become the passive clients of bureaucrats who don't care how long you have to wait, or what you have to carry. One has the sticky feeling that many of those who are quietly frustrated about this state of affairs actually believed that things would get better or get worse depending on whom they voted for for President. □

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Post-Election Fight

LAS VEGAS—Richard Nixon used to tell his associates, exhausted after a long campaign, not to take vacations right away. Work for a while, he'd say, taper off for a week, and then go to the beach for a long sun-soak. My own counsel is different. I recommend, especially after a campaign like this, a politically incorrect weekend in Las Vegas, complete with professional prizefight.

The restorative process begins as your plane skids to a stop at McCarran Airport. Yes, it's named after former Democratic Senator Pat McCarran, who, for those of you who are too young to remember the Great War, was known in the phrase of the day as a dedicated anti-Communist. Fact is, on his good days he made Tail Gunner Joe look like a wimp. Fact also is, though, that McCarran was only small potatoes in these parts. The city father was none other than Bugsy Siegel, who said he'd build the place and then they'd better come. He did and they did. A civic leader of broad vision, Siegel supported entrepreneurial capitalism, empowerment, and school choice. He was a consistent critic of prosecutorial zeal.

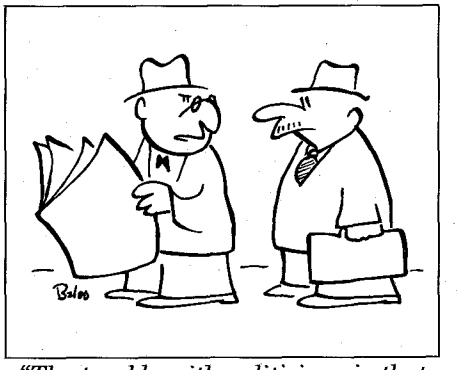
Your white stretch limo awaits you. Don't get too excited. Stretch limos await everybody. Indeed, Las Vegas has become a cashless society, with everybody drinking, gambling, and carrying on as a "guest" of somebody else. I'm not quite sure how this comes out black at the bottom line, but I think it has to do with the speed with which the pea moves around under the shell. Or, if you're given to political metaphors, think of it this way: We're in for a weekend during which the rich will get richer, the middle class will get the shaft, and the bill will be presented to our children's children. At any rate, it should be fun.

Mr. Freeman is a nonpartisan observer of the public-policy process in Washington, D.C. He was assisted in the research for this article by James Freeman.

Now it's on to the Mirage for the big fight. This place is worth going about ten miles out of your way to see. Every so often a mechanical volcano erupts in the front yard, shooting real flames into the night sky and scaring the hell out of pedestrians plodding between one casino and another. Old Carville missed a bet here. This volcano could have become a fixture in Clinton spots. Whatever the opposite of infrastructure is, this just might be it.

Inside, there are acres of felt tables, slots, hookers, costume-party cowboys and (most amazing of all to these D.C. eyes) men in tuxedoes that fit. It's showbiz and everybody is starring in his own movie, wearing sunglasses indoors, snapping fingers at cocktail girls, tossing away the rent money with more flair than they do back home. The fight crowd moves a little quicker than the rest, getting a buzz in time for the undercard.

The fight, featuring champion Evander "Real Deal" Holyfield against Riddick "Big Daddy" Bowe, will be held on the campus, as they say, of the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. (This move itself scores pretty well on the Political Incorrectness meter. While most universities were primping this fall to attract a presidential debate, the Runnin' Rebels of UNLV had their eyes on the prizefight.) The Thomas and Mack Center, where the college team plays hoops, has the look of a big-time urban arena, replete with neon signage for competing beer companies. And here in the $800 seats, I find what we were looking for the past six months—a solid GOP precinct. Orange County may be gone, but Row 6 is holding. And the celeb watching is primo.



"The trouble with politicians is that they always put my *money where* their *mouth is."*

Best Hair: Andre Agassi, sporting a shoulder-length tri-color tangle.

Best Entrance: Magic Johnson. The crowd surges forward to touch him, for some reason.

Worst Entrance: Jack Nicholson. Great actor, though. He is believable tonight as a small, creepy, Goodwill-clothes kind of guy.

Best Voice: Michael Buffer. Invisible-hand-wise, this guy may be the last piece of the puzzle. He makes six figures for intoning, "Let's get ready to rumble" before big fights.

Best Jacket: Mr. T. He edges out Melvin Laird (of whom my streetwise seat-neighbor says, "Hey, there goes Dean Rusk").

Best Height Spread: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and his 5′2″ blonde friend.

ALL OF Hollywood's tough guys are here—Sylvester Stallone, Mel Gibson, Kevin Costner, Bruce Willis. They are here to see two really tough guys—Holyfield and Bowe—beat each other within an inch of their lives. (Have you noticed? Nobody ever complains about fighters being overpaid.) And of course they are here without their wives. There are no women in Las Vegas. Only broads.

Michael Buffer enters the ring to hype his way through the introductions. He assures us that this bout is sanctioned by the Nevada State Ath-a-letic Commission. (Pause. Imagine, if the handle is nine figures, a human activity that would be left unsanctioned by the Nevada State Ath-a-letic Commission. Pause. I give up.) He brings on the sculpted, 205-pound Holyfield and the towering, 235-pound Bowe. The bell is struck and the fighters begin to move, stick, cross, and combo. For 12 rounds they batter each other, shoving, grabbing, sucking for breath. At the end, Holyfield, with one eye puffed closed and the other glazed with blood and sweat, mounts a final furious attack. It is not enough and the championship goes to the better man. The crowd stands and applauds long into the night.

—NEAL B. FREEMAN

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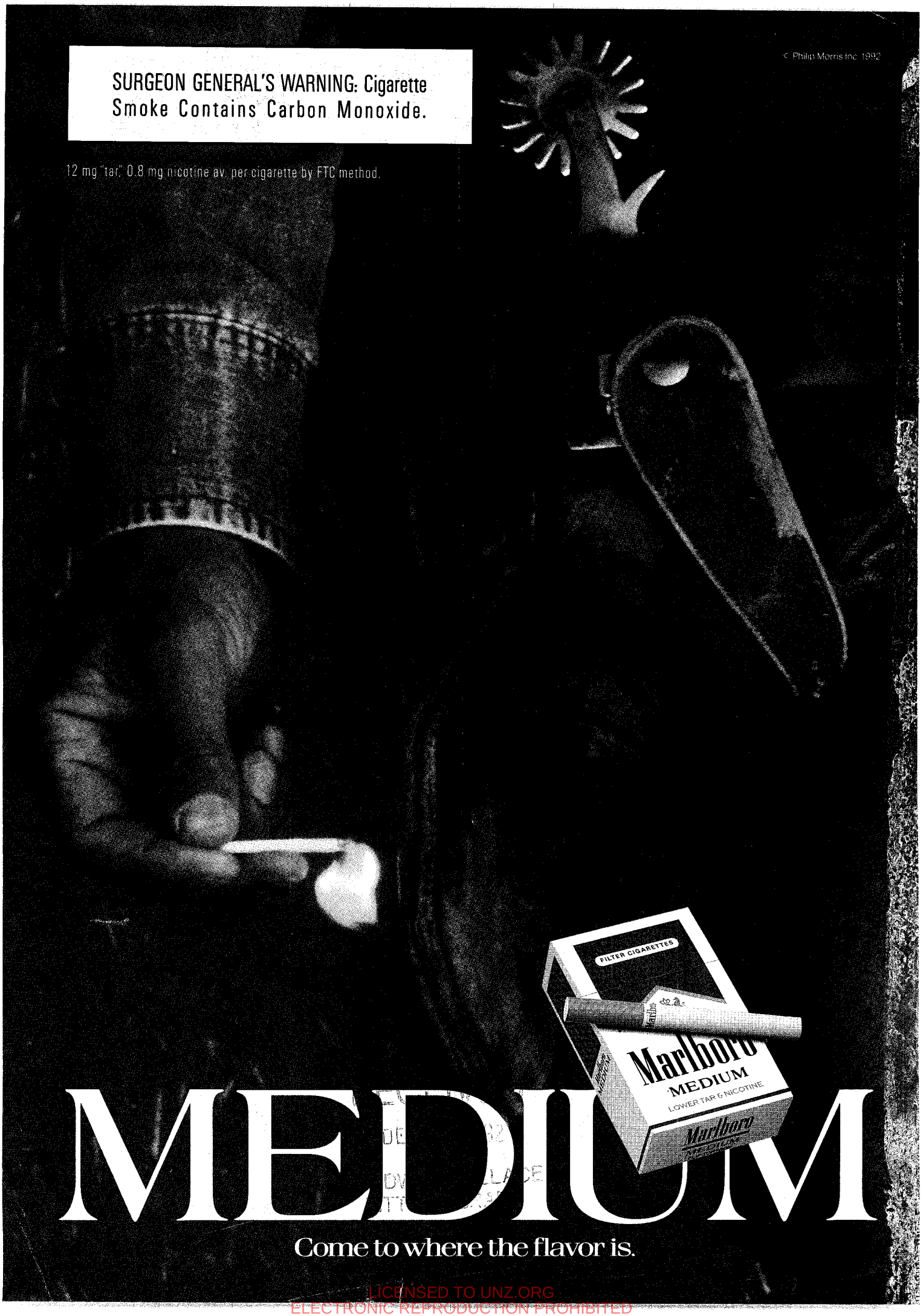

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